This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

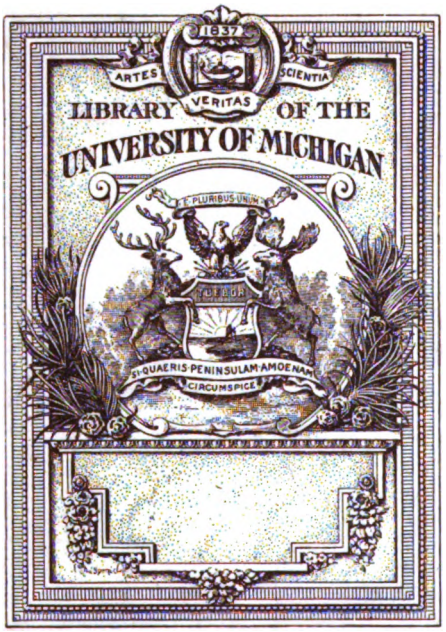
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Digitized by Google

DC
280.5
.E8
A3
v.1

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MEMOIRS OF DR. THOMAS W. EVANS

Digitized by Google

IN THE "STORY OF THE NATIONS" SERIES

Illustrated. Large Crown 8vo, Cloth, 5/-

MODERN FRANCE (1789—1895)

By ANDRÉ LEBON,

MEMBER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES.

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HE EMOIRS

OF

HOMAS VA

EDITED BY

EDWARD A

VOL. I.

NDON

PER

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

EMOIRS

OF

OMAS VAN

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MEMOIRS

OF

DR. THOMAS W. EVANS

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SECOND FRENCH EMPIRE

EDITED BY

EDWARD A. CRANE, M.D.

ILLUSTRATED

VOL. I.

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE · MCMV

Digitized by Google

[*All rights reserved.*]

Digitized by Google

THESE volumes, entitled "The Memoirs of Dr. Thomas W. Evans —Recollections of the Second French Empire," contain a portion of the "Memoirs and Unpublished Works" of the late Dr. Thomas W. Evans; and their publication is approved and authorised by his Executors, as directed by the writer in his last will and Testament.

CHARLES F. MULLER,
ARTHUR E. VALOIS,
EDWARD A. CRANE,
WILLIAM W. HEBERTON,
Executors under the will of Thomas W. Evans, deceased.

PARIS, 1905.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Preface

ON account of my friendly connection for more than thirty years with the late Dr. Thomas W. Evans, and in compliance also with his frequently expressed desire that I should be the editor of his "Memoirs" and manuscript remains, these writings were placed in my hands soon after his death; and I have since been requested by his executors to prepare for publication that portion of them which gives the sub-title, and forms the subject-matter of this volume.

Dr. Evans's long and close attachment to Napoleon III. and his family, the confidential relations he maintained with other sovereigns and princely houses, and his large and intimate acquaintance among the men and women who, from 1848 to 1870, were the governing powers in Europe, afforded him unusual opportunities of observing the evolution of political ideas and institutions in France, and the conditions and the causes that immediately preceded and determined the fall of the Second French Empire as seen from within; and supplied him also with facts and very valuable information concerning the same subjects as seen, or gathered in, from without. No

Digitized by Google

man, moreover, was better acquainted than he with what may be termed the moral atmosphere of the several Courts to which, for so many years, he was professionally attached. In a word, he had acquired an unusual amount of that kind of knowledge which is derived from frequent and informal intercourse with persons filling the highest official and social positions in widely separated political communities, and which especially qualified him to form and pronounce correct judgments, with respect to the significance of the events that were the most remarkable, and the character of the rulers and of the men who were the most prominent, during a very interesting period of French and European history.

Although Dr. Evans could make very little pretension to literary ability, he possessed the gift of saying what he had to say with such evident sincerity, that it is greatly to be regretted he has placed on record so little, when he might have told us so much, concerning the personal qualities, opinions, habits, and manner of life of the great personages with whom it was his privilege to become acquainted. Indeed, I am quite sure that whoever reads this book—whatever defects he may find in it—will sometimes feel that he is a very near and sympathetic witness of events and incidents which the writer himself saw and has with such distinctness and soulfulness described.

The writings entitled "Memoirs," by Dr. Evans, were, as left by him, in two parts. The first contained a sketch of the political and military situation in France and Germany that immediately preceded the Franco-German War, together with a very full

Digitized by Google

account of the escape of the Empress Eugénie from Paris, and the establishment of the Imperial family at Chislehurst. This formal narrative was prepared in 1884, but remained unpublished — principally from a sentiment of delicacy on the part of the writer. Twelve years later, in 1896—the year before his death—Dr. Evans began to make a record of his reminiscences in an autobiographical form, but composed in substance of occurrences and experiences personal to himself during his life as a court dentist, together with numerous character sketches of the distinguished people it had been his good fortune to meet and to know. This record was the second part of the "Memoirs." Unfortunately no attempt had been made, while preparing it, to give to it a literary form. The subjects were treated separately and with little regard to their proper order. Many of the pages contained merely notes or memoranda; and, as was inevitable under the circumstances, incidents were re-told, and there were numerous minor repetitions, especially with respect to matters that had already been set forth in the first part. The work of co-ordinating and assimilating the materials had been left for a more convenient season—and, as it has proved, for another hand to do.

In preparing the contents of the present volumes I have selected from the two parts the portions in which, in my opinion, the public is most likely to be interested, and which at the same time are of the greatest value historically. They tell the story of the flight of the Empress from her capital, of which no complete and authentic account has ever before

Digitized by Google

been published, and include practically everything in the "Memoirs," that relates to the Second French Empire.

The greatest difficulty that I have encountered in the course of my editorial work, has arisen from the necessity of suppressing one or the other of the repetitions, or very similar statements, in the parts referred to; and then, so fusing or, rather, stitching the paragraphs and sections together as to give to the whole sufficient continuity and unity to be acceptable to myself without doing violence to the original text. The plan adopted, and which I believe to be the best in view of the facts above mentioned, has been to keep together, and in the body of this book, what relates directly to the Fall of the Empire, and to include in the opening and closing chapters most of the author's more strictly personal reminiscences and appreciations of the Emperor Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie.

I certainly should feel, however, that I had altogether failed to accomplish what I have sought to do, were I not aware that it is the generally conceded privilege of the writer of memoirs and reminiscences to remember only what he chooses to remember, and to say it just when it pleases him to say it. And in according with me this liberty to the author, I trust the reader may be equally generous towards the editor of this book, so far as he may be disposed to hold him responsible for an arrangement of its contents that may occasionally seem wanting in sequence, or for a style of writing that is perhaps, at times, a little too *décousu*.

Digitized by Google

But there is one point of more importance than any question of form with respect to which I have no desire to disclaim my responsibility. For the accuracy of the narrative where it relates to matters of which I have a personal knowledge—and they are many—I hold myself equally responsible with the author. And I may also say that I have felt it to be a part of my editorial duty to verify his statements, where errors of fact seemed possible, whenever I could do so conveniently; to compare with the originals the passages he has cited from various writings and reports; to name his authorities, when they were not given by him; and to contribute a few *appendices* and foot-notes, in one or two of which I have not hesitated to express my own opinion of persons with some freedom.

EDWARD A. CRANE.

22 RUE ST. AUGUSTIN, PARIS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Contents

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF A FRIENDSHIP

PAGE

How my acquaintance with Prince Louis Napoleon began. His life at the Élysée—The day before the *coup d'État*—Dr. Conneau and Charles Thélin—The Emperor's way of bestowing favours—A cross of the Legion of Honour—A diamond pin—My professional relations with the Emperor—Dentistry in France in 1847—The wife of a dentist—My position at Court—"Have you nothing to ask?"—The courage of the Emperor—The bombs of Orsini—The Emperor's generous nature—A debt of honour—A Dreyfus case—François Arago—The Emperor's philanthropy—"L'Empereur des Ouvriers"—The Emperor's amiability—Abd-el-Kader 1

CHAPTER II

CHARACTER OF THE EMPEROR

The mother of Louis Napoleon—The personal appearance of the Emperor—His love of the country—"He was a wonderful landscape gardener"—He cared nothing for art for art's sake—His utilitarianism—His domestic habits—He was an able writer—He despised flattery—M. Duruy—The Emperor disliked circumlocution—He was tenacious of his opinions, but slow to form them—The sources of his information—The Burlingame Mission—The Emperor's extreme caution—An illustration—The Emperor's wit and humour—He was a peacemaker—His imperturbability no mask—He was a forcible speaker—His religion—His pride—His qualities the opposite of our faults 38

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

THE MARRIAGE OF THE EMPEROR

PAGE

Louis Napoleon is advised to marry—The Princess Caroline—The Duchess of Hamilton—Ancient and modern Knights—The Duke of Hamilton—A great surprise—Eugénie de Montijo ; her character, her person—The Emperor announces his engagement—How the announcement was received—The marriage ceremony—My first visit to the Empress at the Tuileries—A little incident—The Empress does not forget her old friends—Pepa—The character of Eugénie de Montijo unchanged by her elevation to a throne—Criticism—The fortune of the Imperial family—The demands upon the privy purse—The generosity of the Empress—The first act after her engagement—Her visits to the cholera hospitals—"Pious, but not bigoted"—Her public liberalities—The house parties at Compiègne—The Empress a lover of the things of the mind—The Suez Canal—The character of the Empress described by the Emperor—The Empress not exempt from the defects of her qualities 80

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPERIAL COURT—THE WAR OF THE REBELLION

The Imperial Court—"Paris the heaven of Americans"—The banquet to General John A. Dix—The American colony—How things have changed—Parisian society in those days—Causes of its decadence—Its "exoticism"—*Sunt lacrimæ rerum*—The War of the Rebellion—The Emperor not unfriendly to our Government—Mr. William M. Dayton—How I kept the Emperor informed with respect to the progress of the war—The Roebuck incident—The Emperor is urged to recognise the Southern Confederacy—How he came to suggest friendly mediation—He sends for me to come to Compiègne—The interview and what came of it—My visit to America—Interviews with Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward—Visit to City Point—Conversations with General Grant—His opinion of "political generals"—The Emperor's first words on my return—Why the Imperial Government did not recognise the Southern Confederacy—The Mexican Expedition—The assassination of Mr. Lincoln—The United States Sanitary Commission—The Empress's letter to me 127

CHAPTER V

THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FRANCE

The importance of the works of Napoleon III.—He created modern Paris ; its parks and waterworks ; its public buildings—Provincial

Digitized by Google

PAGE

cities reconstructed—Roads and railways extended—Credit institutions founded—Commercial treaties made—The increase of capital; of trade—The interest of the Emperor in the lodgings of artisans and the sanitation of cities—What the Emperor did for agriculture—His interest in the welfare of the industrial classes—How he came to the relief of the people at the time of the great inundations—The Exposition of 1867—A dreadful picture of moral corruption—The greatest work of Napoleon III. 174

CHAPTER VI

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR OF 1870-71

A visit to Saint Cloud—The candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern—The Duke de Gramont—The Emperor not inclined to war—The opinion of the Empress—The Emperor's bad counsellors—General Lebœuf—An incident—Public feeling—I propose to establish an Ambulance—The service it subsequently rendered—The declaration of war—Enthusiasm of the people—The excitement in Paris—The anxiety of the Emperor—He felt that France was not prepared for the war—His interest in the army—The condition *sine quâ non*—Words not to be forgotten—The departure of the troops—The Empress is appointed Regent—The Emperor leaves Saint Cloud for Metz—Misgivings 193

CHAPTER VII

THE FRENCH ARMY—SEDAN AND BISMARCK

The efforts of the Emperor to increase the strength of the army—His proposals are denounced by the Opposition—Favre—Thiers—Magnin—Jules Simon—State of the army when war was declared—On arriving at Metz the Emperor finds nothing ready—Misled by incorrect reports—A fair example—The situation becomes more and more difficult—A change of commanders—Sedan—A vivid account of the battle written by the Emperor—Further resistance impossible—The flag of truce—The letter of the Emperor to the King of Prussia—General de Wimpfen meets von Moltke and Bismarck at Donchéry—Interview between the Emperor and Bismarck described by Bismarck in a letter to the King of Prussia—Two letters—"Conneau" 235

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

THE FALL OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

PAGE

Effects in Paris of the news of the first reverses—"*Nous sommes trahis*"—The resignation of the Ministry—General de Palikao—A new Ministry is formed—General Trochu is appointed Military Governor—An unsuccessful mission—The announcement of the disaster of Sedan—A Cabinet Council is convoked—General Trochu is requested to come to the palace—The night of September 3rd at the Tuileries—The morning of September 4th—The council of Ministers—A deputation is sent to the Empress—Her Majesty is advised to resign—Her reply—The proposition of M. Thiers—The Palais-Bourbon is invaded by the mob—The conduct of General Trochu—The Emperor pronounces it "flagrant treason"—The simple facts—A pandemonium—The last session of the Senate—"I yield to force" . 280

Digitized by Google

List of Illustrations

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE . . . . *Frontispiece*
From an engraving by Jouanin, after Winterhalter's portrait.

DR. THOMAS W. EVANS . . . *Facing p.* 1
From a photograph by Ch. Reutlinger taken about 1875.

MADEMOISELLE EUGÉNIE—COMTESSE DE TÉBA „ 90
From a photograph taken in 1852.

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE . . . „ 129
From a photograph taken about 1865.

GENERAL REILLE PRESENTING TO KING WILLIAM THE LETTER OF NAPOLEON III. . . „ 265
From a photograph of the painting by A. Von Werner.

NAPOLEON III. . . . . „ 277
From his last photograph taken by W. and D. Downey in 1872.

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE . . . „ 300
From a photograph taken by W. and D. Downey in 1871.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

DR. THOMAS W. EVANS.

From a photograph by Ch. Reutlinger taken about 1875.

To face p. 1.

Digitized by Google

Recollections of the Second French Empire

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF A FRIENDSHIP

How my acquaintance with Prince Louis Napoleon began—His life at the Elysée—The day before the *coup d'État*—Dr. Conneau and Charles Thélin—The Emperor's way of bestowing favours—A cross of the Legion of Honour—A diamond pin—My professional relations with the Emperor—Dentistry in France in 1847—The wife of a dentist—My position at Court—"Have you nothing to ask?"—The courage of the Emperor—The bombs of Orsini—The Emperor's generous nature—A debt of honour—A Dreyfus case—François Arago—The Emperor's philanthropy—"L'Empereur des Ouvriers"—The Emperor's amiability—Abd-el-Kader.

IN November, 1847, I came to Paris with my wife, having accepted an invitation from Cyrus S. Brewster, an American dentist of repute then living in Paris, to associate myself with him professionally.

In France everything was then quiet. M. Guizot, the Prime Minister, ruled the country with an authority that was absolute. The politicians, of course, were, some of them, clamoring for "Reform," and all of

Digitized by Google

them playing the eternal game of seesaw on every question of public concern that might serve their personal or party interests. But the people were apparently uninterested or asleep. It seems that they were just on the point of waking up. Three months later, in February, 1848, the Tuileries were invaded by the Paris mob, and Louis Philippe, having cut off his whiskers, under the cover of an old hat and a shabby coat, made his escape from the palace. The Republic was now proclaimed and the march of events was rapid—the opening of National workshops, the election to the Constituent Assembly in April; and then the barricades and the bloody days of June, with the shootings and transportations of the apostles of Communism—in rehearsal for the final scene in the great drama of 1871.

On the 23rd of September, 1848, Prince Louis Napoleon, having been elected a member of the National Assembly, left London, and the following day arrived in Paris. Less than three months afterward he was elected President of the French Republic, and established his residence at the Palace of the Elysée in the Faubourg St. Honoré, where he remained until the 24th of February, 1852, when he removed to the Tuileries, and occupied the apartments from which Louis Philippe had fled, exactly four years before—on the 24th of February, 1848.

My acquaintance with the Prince began very soon after he came to Paris. He had not been long at the Elysée when he sent a message to Dr. Brewster, stating that he would like to have him come to the

Digitized by Google

palace, if convenient, as he had need of his services. It so happened, when the message came, that Dr. Brewster was ill and unable to respond to this call himself. It fell to me, therefore, by good fortune, to take his place professionally, and to visit the Prince. And there it was, at the Elysée, that I first saw him.

He received me very kindly, without the least intimation that he had expected to see some one else, so that I soon felt entirely at my ease. I found that a slight operation was necessary, which, when made, gave him great relief. On my leaving, the Prince thanked me most cordially, commending me for the "gentleness" of my manner of operating, and expressed a wish to see me the next day. I then saw him again, professionally; and, from that time, up to the day of his death, I visited him often—sometimes as often as twice a week; for the relations between us were not entirely of a professional nature, having very soon become friendly, and confidential even.

During his residence at the Elysée, I was, on several occasions, invited to come in the evening and take tea with him, and some of his intimate associates, at a house in the Rue du Cirque, where he was a frequent visitor. This house, in which Madame H—— lived, was to him easy of access—a gate in the wall, enclosing the garden of the palace, opening on the street close to the house. There, free from the restraint of official surroundings, the Prince-President loved to take a cup of tea, or to sit during the whole evening sipping a cup of coffee, or smoking a cigarette, his black dog, a great favourite with him, sometimes at his feet and sometimes on his knee.

Digitized by Google

An excellent listener to the conversation of others —it was with the greatest interest that we all listened to him, when he chose to speak. However light the subject, his remarks were never commonplace, but were often weighty and always bore the impress of originality. There were times when he exhibited rare powers of description and a delicate but lively appreciation of the humorous side of things; and other times —the subject moving him—when his earnest and kindly words and the sympathetic tones of his voice were irresistibly seductive, and we—hardly knowing why, whether we were captivated by the personality of the speaker or surprised at the height to which he carried his argument—in wondering admiration sat in silence under the spell of the Charmer. He talked with the utmost freedom of his past life in Germany, in Switzerland, in Italy, in England; of Napoleon and of government in general; but spoke rarely and with more reserve about the French politics of the day. And he liked to hear others talk of their own lives, of the subjects that personally interested them, of their occupations and amusements during the day, and to have the conversation go on as if in a family circle, without the restraints of etiquette. He also liked, on these occasions, to listen to simple music—at the same time admitting that music in general he did not like. He seemed to seek the satisfactions of a home, and the pleasure of being surrounded by a few but intimate friends. Madame Henriette, as she was called familiarly, had living with her no family or relative except a sister—a most beautiful creature, artless but full of grace, whose head was one of the

Digitized by Google

finest I ever saw on a woman's shoulders. As Madame de Sévigné said of Mademoiselle de Grignan, she was *une créature choisie et distinguée.* Here I met MM. Fleury, Persigny, Mocquard, Edgar Ney, and some others. But only a very few of the persons in the *entourage* of the Prince were ever invited into this little society.

The relations of the Prince to the beautiful and devoted Madame H—— have been a subject of censure and even of scandal. The irregularity of the situation he himself recognised; but he was too kind-hearted to break away from it without some strong and special motive. And then, to use his own words:

"Since, up to the present time, my position has prevented me from getting married; since in the midst of all the cares of the Government I have, unfortunately, in my country from which I have been so long absent, neither intimate friends nor the attachments of childhood, nor relatives to give me the comforts of a home, I think I can be pardoned an affection that harms no one, and which I have never sought to make public." [1]

I was, at first, asked by the Prince to go to this house for the purpose of seeing Madame H—— professionally, he remarking to me that he would consider it a favour if I would do so, since were she to go to my office, her presence there might give rise to comment. Thus it happened that subsequently I became one of Madame H——'s occasional evening visitors as well as her professional adviser.

The Prince was very fond of walking in the morning

[1] M. Odilon Barrot "Memoirs," tome iii. p. 361.

Digitized by Google

in the grounds of the Elysée palace, sometimes alone, but more frequently with Fleury or Persigny or some other member of his official household. Several times, when he had something special to say to me, or inquiries to make, he invited me to take a turn with him in the garden, usually speaking in English, for he liked to talk in English whenever he could; and it often served him well when he wished to converse and did not care to have some one, who might be near him, understand what was said. It was during this quiet life at the Elysée that our relations became intimate and that a lasting friendship was formed.

At this time—while President of the Republic—the Prince had few intimate friends, and but very few acquaintances. A stranger to the French people when he came to Paris, he did not seek at once to make new acquaintances; moreover, his power as President being limited, and generally supposed to be temporary, did not attract to the Elysée a crowd of interested friends—supplicants for favours. If he was sometimes oppressed with a sense of political isolation and loneliness, and more than once was heard to say sadly, "I do not know my friends, and my friends do not know me," it was not without its compensations, among which the greatest was the liberty it gave him to form his own friendships, or, perhaps rather, the opportunity it afforded him to watch dispassionately the drift of public opinion in France, and discover the means of realising *les idées Napoléoniennes*—the supreme object of his ambition. For it was in the seclusion of his *Cabinet de travail*—his study—that he always seemed to take his greatest pleasure.

Digitized by Google

These were happy days for the Prince. He had attained, at least in part, to what he had always believed would come—that he would be called upon to rule in one way or another, as his uncle did, the French people. To him I am positive this was a certainty, the realisation of which he considered to be only a question of time. It never seemed in any way to surprise him that events had so shaped his career as to bring him where he was at the moment; and it was his calm belief, at this time, that his increasing popularity and power were only a part of that of which he was also sure to see the accomplishment. If he referred to the significant or exciting political events of the day, it was with quiet ease, never himself excited, never complaining, avoiding exaggeration, and never showing the slightest anxiety or personal concern.

This countenance of extreme placidity which the Prince always wore, seems to me now, if it did not at the time, all the more remarkable when I remember the unsettled and very stormy politiçal situation in France during the years of his Presidency—the extraordinary violence of the Socialists and Red Republicans—the revolutionary manifestations in the streets of Paris, Marseilles, and Lyons; and, finally, the reaction and the plots against his Government laid by the powerful Royalist combination in the Legislative Assembly.

On the morning preceding the night of the *coup d'État*, I was sent for to see the Prince at the Elysée. I noticed that his manner and conversation were more than ordinarily affectionate. There were moments when he appeared to be thoughtful, as if there was

Digitized by Google

something on his mind that he wished to speak about, and yet did not. When I was leaving, he went with me to the door of his study, where I had been conversing with him, and then, placing his arm within my own, walked with me through the adjoining room. He knew that great events were about to happen, but this knowledge did not ruffle his serenity or change in the least the suavity of his voice or the complaisance of his address. That evening there was a reception at the palace, and a crowd of people, his cousin, the Duchess of Hamilton, being present among the rest. No one had the slightest suspicion of the blow that was soon to fall; but just as the duchess, with whom the Prince was talking, was about to leave, he said to her in the very quietest way, as he gave her his hand, with a kindly smile, "Mary, think of me to-night." Something in the tone of his voice, rather than the words, impressed her strongly. What could he mean? The next morning, when the duchess awoke, she learned what was in the mind of the Prince when he bade her good-night, and was amazed at his extraordinary self-control, his seeming impassiveness, and the gentleness of his manner at such a critical, decisive moment in his career.

And this manner never changed. Whether Prince-President, or Emperor, in victory or defeat, he was always the same; and he was also the same in all his relations and intercourse with men, both in official and private life. In return, every one who knew him personally, was drawn towards him by a strong sentiment of sympathy and affection. The devotion of his followers after the affairs of Strasbourg and Boulogne

Digitized by Google

bears witness to this. In those early days, all who knew him intimately wished to follow him.

The two persons who stood nearest to him, and who were attached to him the longest, were Dr. Conneau and Charles Thélin. Conneau was a *protégé* of his mother, Queen Hortense, who, on her death-bed, made him promise never to forsake her son —a promise he observed with the most pious fidelity. Thélin was in the domestic service of the Queen; he was at first Prince Louis' valet, afterward a head servant, and, finally, the treasurer of the Imperial privy purse. Not only were these two men devoted to the interests of the Prince, but they continued to be faithful and unselfish in ways that are rare. When the Prince became Emperor—and their positions were necessarily changed, having everything at their command, if they had wished it—they showed no ambition to be anything more than the true friends of their early companion and master.

Dr. Conneau desired nothing better than to be, as he had been of old, the confidant of his inmost thoughts. He opened and read his letters. He also read the despatches, as well as articles from the newspapers, which were sent to his Majesty from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; for at that Ministry there were secretaries whose business it was to read the different English, Spanish, and Italian newspapers—in fact, to examine all the principal papers from foreign countries, and prepare a *résumé* of their contents for the Emperor's use. Dr. Conneau was often the one to see these summaries first, and read them to his Majesty, using his own discretion and passing over

Digitized by Google

unimportant matters. He was also entrusted with the distribution of the Emperor's private charities; and for this purpose from fifty to one hundred thousand francs were placed in his hands every month. Dr. Conneau held the official position of principal physician attached to the Emperor's person; but the Emperor regarded him as his *fidus Achates*.

"Charles," as he was always called, enjoyed the Emperor's confidence in an equal degree. Dr. Conneau and Charles Thélin had been with the Emperor almost constantly for so many years, in the same countries, that they had learned to speak the same languages that he did, and had acquired many of his habits. I was often struck with the similarity even in the voices of these persons, especially in the softness of their tones, and with the quiet simplicity of each in speaking, at all times. Indeed, they grew to be very much alike in many things. The Emperor never had any thought of his own private interests or of increasing his personal fortune; and the same indifference was shown by Dr. Conneau and Charles Thélin; for, with all kinds of opportunities to grow rich, by taking advantage of their knowledge of impending war or peace, the laying-out of new streets—in a word, of a thousand things that would make the Stock Exchange or values go up or down—at the end of the Empire they were left penniless, having lived on their modest salaries from the very first day they entered into the service of Prince Louis, devoted to their special duties, and without a thought of accumulating wealth.

Not long after the Emperor's death Dr. Conneau came to see me. He told me the only thing he

Digitized by Google

possessed in the world was a collection of Bibles—in several hundred languages or dialects, including some rare copies—which then lay in a heap on the floor of a stable, as he no longer had a place of his own in which to keep them. He said it grieved him greatly to part with this collection, the making of which had given him so much pleasure; but that it distressed him still more to see it treated as it had been, and in danger of being destroyed; and that I would render him a great service if I would take it off his hands and save it. This I at once agreed to do. And when the tears came into the eyes of the kindly old man I felt in my own heart that it was a blessed thing indeed to be able to help a friend in time of need.

The Emperor had an exquisite way of bestowing favours. When he made a present, he often gave it the appearance of paying a debt.

On one occasion which I remember, he engaged a young man to make some researches for a literary work he was interested in. The young man was to have a certain sum paid to him, monthly, in advance. The next day the Emperor handed him double the sum that had been fixed upon. Thinking a mistake had been made, he said, "Sire, you have given me too much." "Oh, no," replied the Emperor; "you forget that you began your services yesterday—*a month ago.*" This was his way of disguising a gift.

After living in Paris a number of years, wishing to go to the United States, I informed his Majesty that it was my intention to return home soon to see my

Digitized by Google

family and country. I had a strong attachment to the relatives and friends I had left in America, and, more especially, I wished to see my mother, as she was advancing in years, and I told him that I felt it a duty to go to her. He said he perfectly understood my wish to return home and my strong desire to see my mother, and that he was glad I felt as I did. He then asked me when I proposed going. On my telling him the date of sailing I had fixed upon, he said, "Come and see me again before you go," naming a day. As he was at the Palace of Saint Cloud I was to go there. Upon my arrival, at the time appointed, he received me in the room which he occupied as a study, on the floor below the apartments of the Empress. After some conversation he led me up the private staircase, and opened the door into the first room, which was a boudoir, or ante-chamber, giving access to her Majesty's apartments. Immediately upon my entering this room with him, for the purpose of saying, as he said, goodbye to the Empress, he took from the table a case containing the cross of a Knight of the Legion of Honour, and, as I stood before him, he fixed the cross to the lapel of my coat, saying, "We want you to go home a Knight." He then opened the door leading into the room where the Empress was, and said, as she came forward, "The Empress wishes to be the first to congratulate the Chevalier;" and he added, "I hope your friends in America will understand how much you are appreciated by us. You will promise us to come back again, won't you?" This was said in that tone of voice and with an expression in his eyes, full

Digitized by Google

of kindness and goodness, which it is quite impossible to describe. His manner under such circumstances was really irresistible. I had many occasions to feel its charm.

I have sometimes thought that the Emperor owed his singular power of winning the esteem and affection of those with whom he had spoken, although but once, to the softness of his voice and to a peculiar hesitancy of manner—especially when opening a conversation—which might be taken for diffidence, the most delicate form of flattery that one man can offer to another.

When misfortunes befell his friends, or bereavements came to those who were near to him, the Emperor never failed to console them with kind words or to remember them by acts of gracious consideration.

On the occasion of the loss of the steamer *Arctic*, in the autumn of 1854—when my wife and I were informed that a dear sister and her husband and child, who were returning to New York from a visit they had paid us, had all three perished—the Emperor, and the Empress also, expressed for us their deepest sympathy.

One morning the Emperor said to me, after referring to this painful event, that he wished to give me, as a token of his regard, a keepsake that I might perhaps doubly esteem. He then handed to me a case within which he said there was a diamond that had been taken from the hilt of a sword which had belonged to his uncle, Napoleon, and had been worn by him, and which he had caused to be reset in a scarf-pin.

Digitized by Google

This pin I rarely wore, for the diamond was not only a remarkably fine one, but I prized it highly as a souvenir and was afraid of losing it. When, in April, 1855, the Emperor and Empress went to England to visit the Queen, Mrs. Evans and I also went to London, where we occupied rooms at Fenton's Hotel, St. James Street. The day after our arrival, having occasion to be present at a royal function, I decided to wear the beautiful pin I had brought with me. And this I did. But, either before I left the hotel or after my return, I met an American gentleman who was stopping in the house, with whom I probably had some conversation concerning the diamond pin, although at the time the conversation seemed so insignificant that I could never recall it. I have always believed, however, that he related the history of the jewel—perhaps in the coffee-room. On going to my room to change my dress, I placed the pin in its *écran*, or case, and, rolling this up very carefully, together with some French paper-money, in several pocket-handkerchiefs, stowed the package at the bottom of my satchel. A few days later I returned to the Continent by the way of Belgium and Holland. On arriving at The Hague I took the package from the satchel, opened the case, and found within it—nothing. The money had not been taken, neither had some jewels that my wife had put in the satchel, but the diamond pin had vanished. The mystery of its disappearance has never been solved. That it was stolen I have no doubt. I am also convinced that its historical character was not foreign to the theft.

Digitized by Google

Being extremely anxious to recover the pin, I reported my loss to the police, and caused an active search to be made for it, and for the thief; but the search was of no avail. Nothing was ever heard of the pin, or how it disappeared. I felt so badly about it that I never spoke to the Emperor of my loss. Years passed, and the loss of the diamond pin had ceased to trouble me.

One morning in the month of May, 1859, a day or two before the Emperor was to leave Paris for the seat of war in Northern Italy, he sent for me to come and see him. On being introduced into his presence, I found him sitting before his toilet-table. Without changing his position, he began to speak at once of the campaign he was about to engage in, and of other matters, when, suddenly turning partly round and looking me directly in the face, he said: "And so you lost the diamond pin I gave you?"

"Yes, Sire," I replied; and, greatly confused, I was about to make some wretched apology for never having spoken of it to him, when he said:

"I knew it had been stolen from you, but it has been found"—taking at the same time from a drawer, in the table before him, a case similar to the one he had given me years before, with the same Imperial crown in silver on the blue velvet.

"Here," he said, "is the lost pin;" and, as I opened the case to look at the jewel, he added quietly, "At least, it may in a measure replace the other. I am going away. Keep this as a souvenir of me."

Digitized by Google

Surely no man ever had a more delicate and delightful way of bestowing favours and recognising the services of his friends.

It was one of my rules to ask of his Majesty no personal favours. I never asked him even for a photograph or an autograph. These things and many others were given to me unasked and of his own free-will, he alone judging when, and under what circumstances, or for what services a recompense should be given.

Once at a large luncheon at the Palace of the Tuileries, when there were many guests present, although the occasion was unofficial, the Emperor—who, I presume, during the morning had suffered from the customary importunity of some of them——feeling in the humour, remarked in a clear voice to a lady sitting at the end of the table: "I have been much occupied this morning with demands for everything. By the by, Countess, I believe you are the only one of the Court that has not asked me for something. Have you nothing to ask?"

"No, Sire, nothing." But after a moment she added, "Yes, I have. My concierge has been asking me to recommend him for the military medal, because he fought in the Crimea and has not received it. If your Majesty would kindly obtain the medal for him I should be very glad."

"The Emperor replied, "It is done. I had observed that you never asked anything of me. I believe you are the only one here—No," he said, turning to me, "Evans has never asked of me anything for himself."

Digitized by Google

My answer was, "I hope your Majesty may always be able to say so;" for I felt then as I do now that, by his frequent remembrances and by his appreciation of the services I had occasion to render him, I was always most generously recompensed without my seeking.

My professional relations with the Emperor began, as I have already said, soon after he became President of the Republic. He had extremely delicate teeth—an inheritance from his mother, he told me; and, being more than usually sensitive to pain—this condition of hyperæsthesia, as Corvisart and Nélaton termed it, was generalised and especially pronounced towards the close of his life—he suffered greatly from the least inflammation, and, in consequence, frequently required my professional assistance. Moreover, he was constitutionally inclined to hæmorrhages, and, when a child, nearly lost his life from the bleeding which followed the extraction of a tooth. In this instance he was saved by the watchful care of his mother, who, in the night, having discovered the flow of blood, put her finger on the gum and held it there firmly until the bleeding stopped.

As I was commonly summoned to the Palace immediately there was anything amiss about his mouth, I generally succeeded in obtaining for him the relief he sought. He hated to be hurt, and I was always very careful not to hurt him when it was necessary to use an instrument for any purpose. It was therefore only natural, perhaps, that the Emperor should have gratefully recognised the immense relief from absolute

Digitized by Google

torture which, on several occasions, I was fortunately and most happily able to secure for him almost immediately I saw him. But his appreciation of such services was something more than personal. It was not limited to me; it reached out and included the whole dental profession. He found the dental art to be of great use to him, and, accordingly, had an excellent opinion of dentists in general, and saw no reason why they should not be as proud of their specialty as the practitioners of any branch of medicine or surgery.

If it was my privilege to render considerable professional services to the Emperor, I was richly repaid in many ways; but more especially by the direct support and encouragement he gave me in the practice of my art, and the social consideration he accorded to me, and, through me, to my profession. Indeed, the immense importance of this can hardly be understood by one not acquainted with the character of the men who practised dentistry when I came to Paris, and the contempt with which they were spoken of and regarded. Those persons who made it their business to treat diseases of the teeth were ranked with barbers, cuppers, and bleeders, just as, a hundred years before, surgeons were, everywhere in Europe. Physicians and surgeons considered the care of the teeth as unworthy of their attention and science; the rectification of those irregularities of dentition that give rise to defects in speech, or disfigure the mouth, they knew nothing about; and extractions were left to be performed by mountebanks at street corners, or fakirs at fairs, where the howls of the victims were

Digitized by Google

drowned by the beating of drums, the clash of cymbals, and the laughter and applause of the delighted and admiring crowd. This *al fresco* practice of dentistry was to me one of the most curious and *foreign* features of street life in the old Paris of 1847.

If the dentist was sent for to attend a patient he was expected to enter the house by the back-stairs, with the tailor and the butcher-boy and the other purveyors to the establishment. The front-stairs were for those only whose social standing gave them the right to use them. Although it was never within my own experience to be invited to go up the *escalier de service*, it is not surprising that the low social standing of dentists in general, at this period, should have been made known to me in ways that sometimes left a sting. But after a while these things ceased to trouble me. In fact, after I had been in Paris a few years, I seldom heard, or overheard, a word in disparagement of my profession. An exception, however, to this experience may be worth mentioning.

At a ball given at the Palace of the Tuileries, in 1857, to which Mrs. Evans and myself had been invited, we overheard a conversation which took place so near to us that very little of it was lost.

"Who is that woman?" said one lady to another—"she is so delicate and ladylike—she looks like an American." "Yes, she is," was the reply; "and only think—she is the wife of a dentist! How dreadful!"

A few minutes later, the Emperor approached us and shook hands with us both.

Digitized by Google

"And who is the gentleman to whom the Emperor is now speaking so cordially?" again inquired the lady first mentioned. "Oh, that is Evans, the dentist, the husband of the woman; he was pointed out to me last week at the Cowleys'; they say he is very clever and that the Emperor thinks very highly of him; his manners appear to be good. Those American dentists, it seems, are something wonderful."

Not long after I received a visit from both of these ladies, who wished to consult me professionally; and one of them, the Countess de L——, who is still living, became one of my warmest personal friends.

I was young and ambitious when I came to Paris, and as an American citizen I had never thought it would be necessary for me to feel ashamed of myself socially, or that I was about to be deprived of the privileges and civilities usually conceded to the practitioners of the liberal arts and professions The Emperor quickly saw how I felt about the position I was to hold in his immediate *entourage*, in view of my professional relations to him. And since he was not disposed to recognise distinctions of any kind among men, except such as were determined by intelligence, or personal accomplishments, or special abilities, I was very soon admitted to the Elysée officially, on a footing of equality with doctors of medicine, surgeons, university professors and men of science in general. When the Court was established, I received my appointment of "Surgeon Dentist," and in the same form and on the same terms as the other doctors and surgeons in the "Service de Santé" attached to the "Maison

Digitized by Google

de l'Empereur." My Court dress was the gold-embroidered special uniform worn by every member of the medical staff. We all received the same compensation.

I was the only dentist at the Court of the Tuileries; and the Emperor was most kind and considerate to me on all occasions, in public as well as in private. Once having a standing at the Imperial Court I was enabled to be received at other courts; and there are few, if any, in Europe where I have not been at some time a guest.

I am sure that the consideration which has been shown to me by nearly all the royal families of Europe, whether visiting them professionally or otherwise, has been of very great service to me personally; and I am equally sure, but still more pleased to believe, that my profession has been benefited and honoured also by the numerous Imperial and Royal attentions and honours I have received, during the nearly fifty years that I have practised the art of dentistry in Europe.

Sensitive as the Emperor was to physical pain, no man faced danger more bravely or more calmly. The courage that he displayed at Strasbourg, at Boulogne, and at Sedan, is a matter of history; so also is the extraordinary self-possession, at a most critical moment, that enabled him to effect his escape from the fortress at Ham.

I saw him soon after the cowardly attempt to kill him and the Empress, made by Orsini, in front of the Opera House, on the evening of January 14,

Digitized by Google

1858. The bombs had killed several persons outright and wounded one hundred and fifty-six others. The carriage in which he was riding was wrecked, and one of the horses killed. The Emperor's hat had been pierced with a projectile, and the Empress' dress spattered with blood; but by a miracle, as it were, their Majesties escaped untouched. Descending from their carriage, calm and self-possessed, in the darkness — for the explosion had extinguished the gaslight—and in the midst of the cries and the rush of the panic-stricken crowd, they pushed their way on to the Opera House, where, when they appeared in the Imperial *loge*, they were greeted by the audience with tumultuous applause. The performance—"Marie Stuart," with a ballet representing the assassination of Gustavus III., King of Sweden—was not stopped; and their Majesties remained in the house until its close.

At midnight they returned to the Tuileries.

When the report of this attempt to assassinate the Emperor reached me, I was about to go to the English Embassy, where I had been invited by Lady Cowley. As is usually the case in times of great public excitement, the facts were exaggerated. I was told that the Emperor and Empress had both been killed. Stunned by the news, it was some time before I could realise the situation. It then occurred to me that the Tuileries might be attacked and that the young Prince Imperial might perhaps be in danger. My carriage was at the door, and I drove at once to the palace, where I learned that their Majesties had not been killed. I saw Miss Shaw, however, and told her that

Digitized by Google

I had come to take her and the "baby," as she called the little Prince, if there should be any fear for his safety, over to the British Embassy, where I was sure "dear Lady Cowley" would be only too pleased to protect him. But it was very soon evident that the occupants of the palace were in no danger. Not long after I arrived Lord Cowley, together with other representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and a number of high officials, came to the Tuileries to congratulate the Emperor and the Empress on their fortunate escape.

When their Majesties entered the *salon*, where we had all assembled, I was surprised to see that the terrible tragedy they had witnessed, and of which they alone were the intended victims, had in no way visibly affected the absolute self-command and habitual serenity of the Emperor; and that the Empress thanked, with her accustomed dignity and grace and the sweetest of smiles, those who had come to tell her how happy they were to know that she had met with no harm.

But the Empress soon hurried to the room of the young Prince to see her "darling"; and it was only then, when she had clasped him in her arms, that she gave way to emotion.

The Emperor related to us some of the particulars of the affair, without showing the least excitement. He deplored the loss of life, and the sorrow and suffering it had occasioned, and observed that every one had reason to be thankful that the number of the killed was not greater. Pointing to the hole torn in his hat, he turned towards me and said very calmly:

Digitized by Google

"This was done by an English slug—that bomb was made in England."

I saw him again the next morning. He then spoke of the event as if it were really something that concerned others rather than himself—as if it suggested to him no personal danger—as if he felt perfectly sure that his time had not yet come. And the same day he drove out with the Empress, going the whole length of the boulevards, with only a single attendant.

Again his self-control was put to a severe test at the time of the great review held at Longchamps, in 1867, in honour of the Czar, when Berezowski, the Pole, made his desperate attempt to assassinate Alexander II. Berezowski fired point-blank at the Czar, the two sovereigns being seated side by side in their carriage. The ball, striking the nose of the horse of an equerry, M. Firmin Rainbeaux, dashed the blood in their faces and passed between them. The Emperor immediately arose and waved his hat to show the people that nobody was hurt; and then, resuming his seat, turned to the Czar and said jokingly: "We have now been under fire together."

Paris was greatly excited by this affair; but it apparently affected in no way either the Czar or the Emperor. They moved about among the people as usual, and freely, both by day and by night. I saw the Emperor soon after this wretched attempt to murder a foreign sovereign who had come to visit the Exposition, and thus pay homage to the nation. In speaking of this incident, he exhibited his habitual composure, and appeared not to have been in the slightest degree impressed with a sense of the danger

Digitized by Google

he had escaped. His only feeling seemed to be one of regret that such an experience should have happened in Paris to a guest of France. "I am sorry," said he, "that our hospitality should have been so outraged."

Unostentatious and full of charm, how little the outside world knew the generous and affectionate nature underlying the personality which it considered cold and calculating!

The sympathy of the Emperor for any one in distress was so great that often it was almost impossible for him to resist the generous impulse of the moment. More than one person has owed everything in life—position, fortune, honour even—to being able to make a direct appeal to his Majesty; as, for instance, the young officer of the Imperial Guard who had ruined himself one night at cards. Having left the table without a sou, and twenty thousand francs in debt, this young man, with dishonour staring him in the face, went straight to the Emperor, and told him the whole story, saying that he saw but one sure way out of his trouble, and that was to kill himself. The Emperor listened calmly until he had finished; and then, without uttering a word, opened a drawer in his bureau, and taking out twenty one-thousand-franc notes, he handed them to the young man, saying as he did so, "The life of one of my soldiers is worth more than the money I have given you, but I am not sufficiently rich to be able to redeem them all at that price." Then, with a pleasant smile, he added: "You can go now—but don't do it again."

Digitized by Google

And if credence can be given to another story, whispered about at the time, but afterward told openly, the goodness of heart of Napoleon III. sometimes led him to be as inconsiderate of the letter of the military code as was our great President Abraham Lincoln.

The case was one of espionage—a Dreyfus case, in point of fact. A young artillery officer of distinction, and, moreover, a sort of *protégé* of the Emperor, was charged—so it is said—with furnishing the Austrian Government with a description of a rifled cannon which had been constructed under the Emperor's personal supervision. This was just before France and Italy declared war against Austria. The case having been fully investigated, the incriminating facts and circumstances were reported to the Emperor, who listened to what was said in silence. He requested, however, that the lieutenant should be brought before him the next day. As soon as the accused officer was ushered into his Majesty's presence, he was seized with a nervous paroxysm that made him speechless and was pitiful to witness. Napoleon III., standing before him, and looking calmly in his face, said in the quietest manner possible, "It is true, then—you are a traitor!" As the young man made no reply, but began to sob, the Emperor continued, "Stop your crying, sir—listen to me! Out of respect for the honour of the army, and inasmuch as the criminal act you were about to commit has, very fortunately, not been carried out, I pardon you. Having once loved you, this is my sad duty. Furthermore, I do

Digitized by Google

not wish that any one should be able to say that a French officer has betrayed his country. There will be no scandal; and for you there will be, at the same time, no punishment. But, from this hour, you are no longer a soldier. Hand to me your resignation immediately and I will send it to the Minister of War."

The lieutenant wrote his resignation on the spot and gave it to the Emperor, who, taking it without a word, walked to his desk to resume the work upon which he was then engaged.

As the story goes, when the young man left the Emperor's cabinet, the officer who had him in charge said to him, "Well, his Majesty has been very indulgent to you—you will neither be shot nor degraded. You are satisfied, are you not?" The young man making no reply, he continued, "But you understand, sir, what the pardon of the Emperor must mean—for you?" Then, looking up into the face of the officer and speaking for the first time, the young man said, "Yes, sir."

And that evening he blew his brains out.

So the honour of the army was saved. But I am quite sure it was never the intention of the Emperor to have it saved in that way. It would have been incompatible with one of the reasons assigned by him for pardoning the offence committed, and contrary also to his well-known abhorrence of all scandal. And the story itself—is it true? For, kind as the Emperor always was, no man could be firmer or more inexorable than he, when dealing with subjects relating to principles and public order.

Digitized by Google

But the story of the payment of the "debt of honour" is authentic. And it may please the reader to know that the twenty thousand francs were returned to the Emperor, and that the young man not only followed the advice given to him, but became, afterward, one of the most brilliant and distinguished officers in the French army.

The kindness and generosity of the Emperor were not, however, the products of a passing emotion or a commonplace feeling of good-fellowship, limited to those who were brought into immediate relationship with him, but arose from an elevated sentiment of benevolence, of longanimity even, towards all men. When the death of François Arago was announced, although the great astronomer and physicist had been one of his most uncompromising political enemies, the Emperor directed that the Government should be represented at the funeral by Marshal Vaillant, the Grand Marshal of the palace, and he himself, personally, by an *officier d'ordonnance*, Baron Tascher de la Pagerie. He was willing, at once, to efface from his mind the depreciatory words that Arago had uttered, words that the world itself would not long remember, and to pay an immediate tribute to the genius of the man whose name the nation was about to place upon the walls of the Pantheon. And how ready he was to honour the memory of Carnot! how ready to come to the relief of Lamartine, in his old age and poverty! And yet how small, even at the time, was the recognition he received for these generous acts. Strange as it may seem, there was scarcely a newspaper that did not reproach him for

Digitized by Google

extending a helping hand to the author of "Jocelyn." But the Emperor was willing to recognise the merits of men who had stood aloof from him, and from whom he had nothing to expect in return for his generous appreciation of the services they had rendered to their country. He took of events and of men a view too broad and too impersonal ever to forget that he was Emperor of all the French, or to refuse Imperial homage to those persons who had conspicuously contributed to the prosperity and glory of France—even were they his bitterest enemies.

He wished to see France great and prosperous. But the dream he cherished was that Europe and the world might be at peace; and his hope, his ambition was that it might be his destiny to lay the foundations of a future reign of justice among men. In 1854 he said, "France has no idea of aggrandisement; I love to proclaim it loudly, the time of conquests has passed never to return, for it is not by extending the limits of its territory that a nation is to be henceforth honoured and to become powerful; it is by making itself the leader of generous ideas and by causing the sentiment of right and justice to prevail everywhere." And he continued to say these things to the end of his life—striving all the while to make real what he was profoundly convinced ought to be governing principles in a well-ordered State.

The policy for which he has been most severely criticised, that of natural frontiers—the rectification of boundaries which he believed to be necessary for the permanent peace of Europe—was only one of the ways in which his philanthropic feeling found expres-

Digitized by Google

sion. Indeed, there is something really pathetic in his attitude at Saint Cloud, when, reluctantly yielding to the advice of his Councillors and finally consenting to the mobilisation of the troops, he said, "If we should succeed in this war, its most beneficent result will be our ability to secure a general disarmament in Europe."

His philanthropy manifested itself in innumerable ways, and in his dealings with every one, no matter how humble his station in life. His grandeur never weighed heavily with him. A democrat at heart, he loved to talk with the common people—the soldier, the peasant, the working man; he was always willing to listen to their complaints and ready to relieve them when he could.

One day, when he was inspecting some buildings that were being erected by his direction, an aide-de-camp informed him that the workmen seemed to be discontented. "What is the matter?" said the Emperor.

"Well," replied the officer, after hesitating a moment, "they say that you and everybody about you are drinking champagne, while beer is thought to be good enough for them."

The Emperor made no reply, but slowly and alone walked forward, and, approaching a number of the men who were standing together in a group, said, "Good morning, my friends." Then, after a few pleasant words, he continued, "Ah, they have given you beer, I see. Come, let us have a glass of champagne!" And when the champagne, which he then ordered, had been brought and the glasses of all

Digitized by Google

had been filled, calling out to the foreman, and touching glasses with him, he said, "My best wishes," and, turning to the others, "Your good health, my friends!"

All of this was done and said with such perfect ease and naturalness, such entire sincerity, that it went straight to the hearts of these men, who felt that the Emperor was not like other emperors and kings, but was, as they expressed it, "one of us." And yet, although approachable at all times and absolutely free from haughtiness, when he was most familiar there was in his manner a dignity which caused those with whom he was speaking to understand that he was still the Emperor.

Never was a ruler judged more falsely than Napoleon III. He loved mankind, and was always thinking of ways in which he could benefit the people or make some one happy. On one occasion, after he had spoken of the condition of the labouring classes in France, and the measures that ought to be taken to raise the standard of living among the people generally, I ventured to say to him, "Why! your Majesty is almost a Socialist, your sympathies are always with the poor; their welfare would seem to concern you more than anything else."

"It ought to," he replied. Was he not worthy of the title given to him by the people—"*L'Empereur des Ouvriers*"?

But it must not be supposed that the Emperor, deeply interested as he was in ameliorating the condition of the poor, sought to find in fanciful speculations and theories remedies for the want and suffering

Digitized by Google

which he deplored. "No amelioration of the lot of the labouring classes is possible," he said, "except under a firmly established government, and where there is a sense of absolute social security. The false idea is the doctrine that pretends to reach this end by upsetting everything which exists, and by the successful working of chimeras that have no roots in the past, and whose future is hopeless."

Ideas, principles—things that were impersonal and enduring—were the concerns that preoccupied his mind. It was the triumph of these that he strove for; and to which he easily subordinated every other sentiment and impulse. He was always ready to forget the harsh sayings of his political enemies; and if they were men of ability and distinction he frequently took great pains to conciliate them and to secure their services in the interests of the State, and, if possible, their friendship as well. "*On gouverne*," said he, "*avec un parti; on administre avec des capacités.*"

His idea was to establish a government of order and justice in which the rights of every man should be respected; and one also in which the administrative functions should be discharged by the most competent, without regard to rank, or fortune, or privilege, or social circumstances of any sort. And to this end —to this supreme purpose—liberating himself from every transient passion or previous prejudice, he solicited the support of all the people, and strove to keep the way to the highest offices and positions in the Government open to all the talents.

It was by means of this conciliatory disposition, by

Digitized by Google

tact, by the charms of his personality, his conversation, his demeanour, that he subdued his political enemies when he chanced to meet them, and brought many of them finally to rally round him.

The Emperor has been bitterly denounced by his political adversaries, who have applied to him nearly every name in the vocabulary of ineptitude and of crime. These names, however, are not to be taken seriously; they never were by those who uttered them. They are not characterisations. They merely indicate the state of mind of those who made use of them; for, as Paul Louis Courier has told us, "imbecile," "rascal," "thief," "assassin," are in France the conventional epithets which writers and speakers apply to a person when they simply wish to say they do not agree with him. But very few of the Emperor's calumniators have failed to recognise the amiable character of the man; and it is a fact, sufficiently curious to be remarked, that, so far as I know, not one of those writers or "*chroniqueurs*" who have seen fit to be especially spiteful when speaking of the Empress, has failed to accentuate the malice by extolling the generous and noble qualities of the Emperor, and by discharging him even of a large share of his official responsibilities.

Indeed, whatever may be the judgment of contemporary France with respect to the merits or shortcomings of the Imperial *régime*, or of the Emperor himself, nothing is more certain than that it would be extremely difficult at the present time to find a personal enemy of Napoleon III. in the country over which he once ruled.

Digitized by Google

I have had on many occasions the privilege of listening to some of the most distinguished men in Europe, when they have been speaking freely and informally about the Emperor and his Court. While the opinions of these persons were often at variance in regard to matters relating to the policy of the Imperial Government, they had only one opinion as to the Emperor's amiable character and the goodness of his heart. His magnanimity, his forgetfulness of injuries, his great kindness to the unfortunate, even his political enemies, foreign as well as domestic, were willing to admit; although some of those who were the beneficiaries of his generosity, and were indebted to him for everything they possessed, afterward proved singularly inappreciative of the indulgence and favours that had been most liberally granted to them.

Not one of these was Abd-el-Kader, the famous Emir of Algiers—that noble representative of the Arab race who, after years of heroic resistance, having surrendered to the French, on condition that he should not be deprived of his liberty, in flagrant violation of the terms of the capitulation was shut up in prison at Amboise by the Government of Louis Philippe. Nor did the Republic of 1848 have the grace to release him, and thus make amends for a breach of faith that dishonoured the army and was a disgrace to the nation. But the very first act of Louis Napoleon on obtaining Imperial power, in December, 1852, was to set Abd-el-Kader at liberty. Not only did the Prince feel that it was shameful for a great Government to fail to keep its promises to the weak, but that to spare the vanquished was a principle

Digitized by Google

dictated alike by considerations of public policy and humanity. And so the Emir, having been set free, was no longer treated like an enemy, but rather as a brother; for when he knelt before his benefactor to thank him, the Emperor, taking him by the hand, raised him up and embraced him; and then gave him a residence at Broussa, in Syria, and provided him with attendants, and horses, and money, and everything necessary to his comfort and his maintenance, in keeping with his high rank and his splendid military record.

When the Emir came to Paris not long after, he was treated by the Emperor with the greatest consideration. He and his Arab retinue had a place of honour at every fête or military review, and were the lions of the day.

Abd-el-Kader was deeply sensible of the kind attentions and the honours he received during this visit to the French capital. "I never can forget," he said, "what the Lord of Kings has done for me, Abd-el-Kader, the son of Mahhi-el-Din. He is dearer to me than are any of those whom I love—I was far away, and he has brought me near to him. Others may have rendered him greater service; no one can have for him an affection greater than mine."

In 1855, Abd-el-Kader paid a second visit to Paris, where he and his retinue of attendants were again received officially, with the honours and the courtesy due to princes. Wherever they went, the manly bearing and the picturesque costumes of these swarthy guests of the Emperor made them the observed of all observers at the first of the great Paris Expositions.

Digitized by Google

While in the Capital, the Emir came to consult me professionally. I saw him frequently—he visited me even at my own house—and the distinction of the man, and the story of his brave life and his fall from power, interested me greatly. But his gratitude for the favours shown him by the Emperor and the Empress was something he always seemed to carry very close to his heart.

"Where I live," he said, "there are unhappily frequent conflicts between the Mohammedans and the Christians, and, if ever I should have the chance, I shall be more Christian than the Christians, for I have suffered and promised, and Abd-el-Kader never lies."

And his was no vain promise, for when the conflict between the Druses and the Maronites broke out afresh in Syria, in 1860, Abd-el-Kader used his powerful influence among his co-religionists to prevent the massacre of Christians and to preserve peace. Indeed, the Maronites would have been exterminated but for his magnanimous protection.

That the famous son of Mahhi-el-Din never failed to remember his own generous protector and benefactor—nor, indeed, any one who had rendered him a service—I have in my possession an interesting proof.

He said to me one day, "I cannot recompense you for what you have done for me; but I will give you my portrait—and I will write beneath it my name." A pen having been brought to him, he then wrote a number of lines in Arabic, of which the following is a translation:

"Praise be to God! This is my portrait which I

Digitized by Google

have given to the Seigneur Evans, Doctor. I hope that he will keep it.

"When he has cured Kings, they have given him Crosses as a recompense—but I—a poor man, I give him my portrait; and, judging from what I know of his kindness of heart and his character, I am sure he will be as pleased to receive this portrait as he has been to receive the decorations that have been conferred upon him by Kings.

"I myself was once a Sultan—now I am but an orphan, kindly picked up by the Emperor Napoleon III., may God glorify him.

"Written by me, Abd-el-Kader, son of Mahhi-el-Din, about the middle of the month of Moharram, 1272 (beginning of October, 1855)."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

CHARACTER OF THE EMPEROR

The mother of Louis Napoleon—The personal appearance of the Emperor—His love of the country—"He was a wonderful landscape gardener"—He cared nothing for Art for art's sake—His utilitarianism—His domestic habits—He was an able writer—He despised flattery—M. Duruy—The Emperor disliked circumlocution—He was tenacious of his opinions, but slow to form them—The sources of his information—The Burlingame Mission—The Emperor's extreme caution—An illustration—The Emperor's wit and humour—He was a peace-maker—His imperturbability no mask—He was a forcible speaker—His religion—His pride—His qualities the opposites of our faults.

LOUIS NAPOLEON was in more than one sense the son of his mother. He was the younger of Queen Hortense's two (surviving) children; and while the elder brother went at an early age to live with his father, Louis Bonaparte, Louis remained constantly with his mother until he entered the University of Augsburg. The devotion of this mother to her son—who a few years later was to become her only son—was unbounded. It began early, and ended only with her death.[1] In him her

[1] In her autobiography Queen Hortense writes: "Mon fils était si faible que je pensais le perdre en naissant. Il fallut le baigner dans le vin, l'envelopper dans du coton pour le rappeler à la vie."

Digitized by Google

whole life was centred. To his education she dedicated herself. She admired him and was proud of him. "What a generous nature!" she used to exclaim. "What a good and worthy young man!" "He was born to do great things." And his letters to "*Ma chère Maman*," how full they are of filial affection and respect!

The Emperor often spoke of his mother, of how much he was indebted to her for her tender care when a child, and for the wise counsel she gave him during the years they lived together in exile. I doubt if he ever regretted anything more than that his mother did not live to see the realisation of hopes they had cherished in common, and her son on the throne of his uncle. Some of his very last days at Chislehurst were spent in reading over the letters his mother had written to him, and in reviving the memories of those happy years of his life when, at her side, he learned by heart the true story of Napoleon. And it is undoubtedly to her that must be ascribed in a very large measure the powerful impression the career of Napoleon—with its astonishing accomplishments and noble but unfulfilled purposes—made upon the mind of the young Prince. "No one," he used to say, "ever succeeded in describing Napoleon so well as my mother." And no one, perhaps, was so admirably qualified to do this, for the mother of Napoleon III. was not only "adorned with all the talents," and accomplished in nearly every art within the domain of the imagination and of taste, but was a woman of unusual intellectual power and spiritual insight. Nor had any one examined more closely or understood

Digitized by Google

better the character of Napoleon. It is not surprising, therefore, that the lessons given by this mother to this son in his earliest childhood and in his youth, and especially those concerning his duties to his family and his country, like those given by Roman matrons to their children, formed the law and the religion of Louis Napoleon. And this Queen Hortense knew full well when she wrote in her last will and testament the words, "I have no political counsel to give my son. I know that he recognises his position and all the duties his name imposes upon him."

Queen Hortense and the Empress Josephine—the mother and the grandmother of Louis Napoleon—were each of them famous beauties; but the Emperor Napoleon III. was not a handsome man in the sense commonly given to these words. His head was large, usually slightly inclined to one side, and his features were strongly pronounced. The forehead was broad, the nose prominent, the eyes small, greyish-blue in colour, and generally expressionless, owing to a somnolent drooping of the lids; but they brightened wonderfully when he was amused, and when he was aroused they were full of power; nor were those likely to forget it who had once seen, through these windows of the soul, the flash of the fire that burned within. His complexion was blonde, but rather sallow; the lower part of the face was lengthened by a short "goatee"—called in honour of his Majesty an "imperial"—and broadened by a very heavy, silky moustache, the ends of which were stiffly waxed. His hair was of a light brown colour, and, when I first knew him, was abundant and worn rather long; at a

Digitized by Google

later period it was trimmed short, and was habitually brushed in the style made familiar by the effigy on the coinage of the Empire. In complexion, in the colour of his hair, and also in the shape of his head, Napoleon III. was a Beauharnais, not a Bonaparte, and a Frank, not a Corsican. He was a little below the average height, but his person was marked with dignity and distinction, and his deportment with ease and courtliness. No one seeing him could fail to observe that he was not an ordinary man. Late in life he inclined to stoutness; at the time I first met him his figure was not large, but his body was compact and muscular.

He was always carefully dressed, and in public, when in plain clothes, usually wore a black frock coat, tightly buttoned. But whatever the fashion of the day might be in hats, rarely could he be induced to wear any other than a "Count d'Orsay," or a very subdued type of the style in vogue, in which respect he exhibited his good taste—to those of us who remember the tall, flat-brimmed, graceless "stove-pipes" with which the Parisian *hommes du monde* covered their heads under the Empire.

When a young man, the Emperor was fond of athletic sports, hunting, fencing, and military exercises of all kinds. He was a strong swimmer—an accomplishment to which he may have owed his life, on the failure of the expedition to Boulogne—and a fine rider. In fact, he never appeared to better advantage than when in the saddle; and during the years of his Presidency he was often seen on horseback in the parks and suburbs of Paris, accompanied by only

Digitized by Google

one or two attendants. A little later, and after his marriage, he liked to go out in a carriage and to drive the horses himself. When staying at Saint Cloud, he was to be seen almost daily in the park or its neighbourhood, riding with the Empress in a phaeton, behind a span of fast trotters, handling the reins himself, and entirely unattended.

During the latter part of his life, owing to increasing infirmities, he became more and more disinclined to physical exertion. Horseback exercise was now almost impossible, and his out-of-door excursions were limited, with rare exceptions, to carriage drives and walks. He could be seen in these last years almost any day, when in Paris, on the terrace of the Tuileries overlooking the Seine, always moving slowly, and frequently leaning on the arm of an attendant, or stopping occasionally, as he was fond of doing, to look down upon the merry groups of children at play in the garden, whose clamorous happiness, careless and unrestrained, like a breath of fresh air from another world, was an inspiration and a delight to him.

He hated to be shut up, and was never so happy as when he could get away from Paris and be in the open air. He loved the country and country life. I have heard him say that he would have liked nothing better than to be a farmer. He was pleased to see the broad fields, and orchards, and the gardens; he would have been still more pleased could he have cultivated them or laid them out.

When the improvements were being made in the Bois de Boulogne, he took so much interest in the work that he frequently came from Saint Cloud very

Digitized by Google

early in the morning, not simply to see what the engineers had accomplished, but to superintend and direct, or as an American might say, "to boss the job." I have been with him there myself, with M. Alphand, the chief engineer, when, having proposed some change, the Emperor has taken a hammer from a workman and planted a number of pickets with his own hands, to mark the line that in his opinion should be followed. He seemed to take great pleasure in indulging his taste for this kind of work.

A good story that illustrates his real capacity in this direction was told me by the Duke of Hamilton, when I was visiting him at Brodick Castle, in Scotland. Being seated one day on a bench by the side of his Grace, not far from the castle, I remarked, "How wonderfully the vista opens before us; the trees have been so cut away as to make this landscape most picturesque."

"Yes," he replied, "it has been greatly admired; it is quite perfect. But, do you know, this was all done by Louis Napoleon. When he was in exile in England, he used to come here occasionally, and was very fond of the place. But he was always suggesting changes, which, he said, would greatly improve it—the removal of trees from certain places and the planting of others elsewhere—with flowers here and shrubbery there. I, and my father before me, allowed the Prince to carry out his suggestions, and you now see with what excellent and very beautiful results. He was a wonderful landscape gardener; and," he added laughingly, "if he should ever lose his place, I should like to take him as my head gardener."

Digitized by Google

I afterward told the Emperor what the duke had said—that he had a place for him always open, in case he ever needed one. He laughed and replied, "He was always most kind. I shall never forget my free and independent life at Arran with the good duke. Those were among the happiest days of my life, and the privilege I enjoyed of exercising without restraint some of my personal tastes contributed very much to my happiness."

Louis Napoleon had, however, little liking for Art for its own sake—nor speaking generally had he a very high appreciation of the excellency of the products of æsthetic feeling and the poetic imagination. He loved facts, not fancies. He was a philosopher and not a poet. He was called a dreamer; and so he was in the sense in which the word can be applied to a political idealist—to a man incessantly thinking—whose mind is engrossed and preoccupied by social and economic problems. But he was very far from being a dreamer who cherished illusions, or wasted his time in idle speculations. He kept very close to his facts in all his thinking—never reasoning far ahead of them after the manner of visionaries and so-called philosophers.

The Emperor's mind was pre-eminently a practical one. From early youth he was only fond of those studies that had utilitarian ends in view; questions relating to government, to the army, to political economy, to sociology—whatever might contribute to the well-being of the people. There was never a detail so small concerning any of these subjects which, if new to him, failed to interest him. He was also

Digitized by Google

unusually anxious to know all that was to be learned about ingeniously constructed machinery and useful inventions of every kind. He had a great admiration for these things. This, he acknowledged to me, was one of his principal reasons for having a very high opinion of Americans. On my showing him, one day, a mechanical device which a New York gentleman had requested me to submit to him, he said, after examining it carefully, and expressing his appreciation of the skill of the inventor, "You Americans are sensible enough not to permit yourselves to be bound hand and foot by the usages and customs of centuries. Your aim is to accomplish what you do with the least expenditure of force—to economise labour and time; and it is by such economies that industrial and social progress is made possible."

The utilitarianism of the Emperor was not, by any means, a mere sentiment confined to words, and to commending and recompensing others for the excellence of their inventions. Possessing himself an ingenious, constructive mind, he had a decided taste for mechanical work, and liked to suggest improvements and to experiment with things. He so loved to make use of tools that, at one time, he had a lathe set up in a room in the Tuileries, and would often spend an hour there in turning the legs and arms of chairs, and similar objects. And the walls of his study bore the marks of the bullets with which he and Major Minie experimented, when they were working out the problems that led to the invention of the once famous projectile. He often did with his own hands impromptu what he thought he could do better than

Digitized by Google

any one else. I have seen him more than once, when an article of furniture was being moved or a picture hung, and some difficulty was met with, step forward and remove the obstacle himself. And he seemed to take delight not so much in telling how the thing ought to be done, as in showing how easily it could be done, by having some regard for very simple mechanical principles.

But more illustrative still of his love of invention—of his passion, one might say, for making improvements—was the work upon which he was engaged at the time of his death. When, with the approach of winter, in the autumn of 1872, the weather became colder, and the price of fuel increased, it occurred to the Emperor—thinking always of the poor—that something might be done to decrease the great waste of heat carried up the chimneys of dwelling-houses with the ascending smoke.

As the result of his studies he proposed to bring this about by means of a cast-iron cylinder, with certain attachments to be set in the fireplace.

"I think this apparatus," said the Emperor, "will considerably increase the heat in the apartment, and reduce the coal bills by more than one-half." His drawings, all prepared with his own hand, were given to a practical stove-maker, and the apparatus, when constructed, was found to work well and as was intended. But the Emperor thought he could still improve it; and he was experimenting on it when he died. It was the very last work upon which he was engaged. And, if it serves to illustrate the Emperor's mechanical turn of mind, when we remember how

Digitized by Google

much he did during his reign to improve the material and social condition of his subjects, how deeply he was interested in the uplifting of the masses, it is interesting to know that even when dethroned and in exile he still cherished the same humanitarian ideals, and that the last subject which occupied his mind was how he could make lighter the burdens and diminish the sufferings of the poor.

The Emperor's domestic habits were simple. The Emperor and Empress generally breakfasted alone with the Prince Imperial, while residing at the Tuileries—although when at Saint Cloud, or Fontainebleau, or Compiègne, the midday breakfast or lunch was taken with the company in the palace.

The hour fixed for dinner at the Tuileries was seven o'clock, and it was then only that their Majesties were in the habit of meeting at table the guests of the palace, generally from twelve to eighteen in number, who included the officers and ladies of the palace who were on duty for the day, and one or more guests. The table dinner service was very elegant, and the cooking as nearly perfect as possible, with fresh fruit of every sort in all seasons.

But there was little ceremony, and the formalities were few. The dinner was served with the greatest order and promptness. Rarely more than three-quarters of an hour were spent at dinner. And the time always seemed even less than this, if the Emperor was in good spirits, for he generally led the conversation, which was sure to be most interesting and entertaining; the news of the day, reminiscences, stories—

Digitized by Google

these were his favourite subjects. He liked to address his conversation to some one in particular, and to say something amiable to each of the guests; but avoided saying anything of persons—in fact, all talk about persons was strictly tabooed at the Imperial table.

After dinner the company passed into the Salon d'Apollo—a splendid room with a lofty ceiling, and magnificently furnished after the style of Louis XIV.—where coffee was served. The Emperor always took his coffee standing, smoking at the same time a cigarette—the gentlemen standing around and the ladies being seated. After a general conversation for perhaps a quarter of an hour the Emperor was usually in the habit of quietly withdrawing to his private rooms, on the floor below, where he could look over his papers and smoke his cigarettes at his ease.

Often, however, he reappeared at ten o'clock, when tea was served, and remained chatting with the company for a while, or sometimes sat listening but taking no part in the conversation until he finally retired for the night. The Empress generally left the salon about half-past eleven.

The rooms in his palace which the Emperor selected for dwelling-rooms were chosen and furnished with regard to comfort, rather than for luxurious display. He occupied a few chambers having low ceilings on the ground floor of the Tuileries between the Pavillon de l'Horloge and the Pavillon de Flore. Queen Victoria of England, in her diary, speaking of the Emperor's rooms, says:

"In his bedroom are busts of his father and uncle, and an old glass case, which he had with him in

Digitized by Google

England, containing relics of all sorts that are peculiarly valuable to him. In some of the other rooms are portraits of Napoleon, Josephine, his own mother with his elder brother, and one of her with his brother and himself as little children."

The walls of the room where he spent most of his time were covered with miniatures of the Imperial family, and the room itself contained a beautiful collection of arms, and many historical relics and documents of the greatest value.

He loved this room above all. It was his "snuggery." Here he could feel that he was free indeed; here he could put on the loosest trousers, and the coat that he liked, and drop where he pleased the ashes of his cigarettes, of which his pockets always contained a seemingly inexhaustible supply. And here, amid heaps of papers, books, and models, he spent the hours, indulging in pleasant reminiscences of the past or devoting himself to serious studies of the great questions that directly concerned the administration of the Government, or the international policy of France. And he gave here, also, audiences to scholars, inventors, and men of science, talking with them about history and archæology, the latest invention, or the most recent discovery.

How often have I been with the Emperor in this room! And how often had I here an opportunity of admiring the clear, and intelligent, and wise remarks he made in regard to the most varied subjects! There was nothing of importance going on in his Empire, or in other countries, in which he was not interested; and, notwithstanding the cares of Government and

Digitized by Google

his numerous preoccupations, he always found time to inform himself concerning the scientific and industrial accomplishments of the nineteenth century. He especially liked to talk about the marvellous inventions and the practical improvements which were brought to Europe from the United States; it was here, in this room on the ground floor of the palace, looking out upon the garden of the Tuileries, that we had our long conversations with regard to the trans-Atlantic cable, the new tramways, army hospitals, sanitary institutions, and other American applications of art and science by which the whole world has been benefited.

Napoleon III. was a most industrious man. He retired late and rose early. My professional appointments were very often fixed for some early hour in the morning. When I arrived, I generally found him in his cabinet, and learned that he had been there several hours, hard at work, with books and documents and memoranda at hand, studying some special subject, or writing out abstracts, or preparing a paper for some particular occasion.

He was very fond of writing, and took great pleasure in sending to the Press communications to be published anonymously. Early in life he began to exhibit his rare talent as a writer and also as a journalist. And what he wrote was always well written. He needed no help in his literary work. Once his materials were in hand, he preferred to frame his own paragraphs and to polish his own periods. It was the subject that interested him. He had no

Digitized by Google

fancy for superfluous words, or metaphors, or elaborate ornament, but expressed his thought with directness, in language that was definite and transparent, sane and sonorous, and which at times was almost lapidary in its terseness. His published speeches, proclamations, and letters are, many of them, remarkable examples of clear and forcible literary expression. There can be no question about their authorship. It used to be said that Mocquard gave to them their clarity and finish. The death, however, of this accomplished *chef du cabinet* did not affect in the least the quality of the literary work of Napoleon III. For many reasons he was careful to submit what he wrote to the criticism of experts. But his own judgment was the final authority for his literary style. It is a case in which one may plainly see that the style is the man. His acknowledged writings from first to last, without exception, bear the same stamp, and are the products of the same mind. Had Louis Napoleon not been an Emperor he would have been counted one of the ablest publicists and esteemed as one of the most brilliant writers of his time.

I may relate here a little incident which will go to show that the Emperor's literary ability—and, perhaps, in the case I am about to mention, his political tact also—when recognised was not always admired.

It may be remembered that M. Thiers was very friendly to Prince Louis on the latter's return to France in 1848. When the Prince began to think of becoming a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic, he consulted M. Thiers about it, and asked him what he thought of his publishing a declaration

Digitized by Google

of political principles, telling him that if he would consider the subject he (the Prince) would think it over also.

A few days later the Prince called his friends together, and laid before them two drafts of an address to his fellow-citizens. On the first one being read it was pronounced "fine"; it was long, well-developed, carefully written, and sonorous, but intentionally vague. The second one was then called for. It was short, concise, simple, clear—something that "he who ran might read." Every one who heard it was delighted. The preference given to it was unanimous. The Prince then said to his friends, "You embarrass me greatly; the first draft that I read was written by M. Thiers, the second one by myself."

"But yours is the best!" they all exclaimed.

And in consequence the draft of the Prince was adopted and published without the alteration of a word.

On hearing what had taken place at this meeting M. Thiers was greatly exasperated. Not only had his literary self-esteem been wounded, but he foresaw that the Prince, should he be elected to the Presidency of the Republic, would be quite able to dispense with his services in connection with more important matters. He pronounced the manifesto of the Prince "imprudent," and declared that not he, but his friend, M. de Remusat, had written the rejected address, and, of course, finally went over to the Opposition.[1]

[1] This incident is related somewhat differently in the Life of Napoleon the Third, by Blanchard Jerrold, who gives as his authority

Digitized by Google

The Emperor was generally slow to form friendships, but, when once made, they were lasting. They were not broken by calumnious stories—these he never cared to listen to. "You have no need to defend yourself," he said one day to one of his friends, "the more they calumniate you, the more I love you."

The Emperor despised flattery and even the semblance of it. Unlike most princes, he knew men only too well. If he asked of any one his opinion on a subject it was in the hope that the person consulted would not hesitate to make known his real opinion, however opposed it might be to the one he himself had formed; and he never took offence, even when the contrary opinion was the blunt expression of a political difference, provided it was sincerely held. In fact, it was by just such an expression that M. Duruy, the famous Minister of Public Instruction under the Empire, first won the esteem and confidence of his sovereign. Having been invited to look over some chapters of the "Life of Cæsar," which the Emperor was then writing, M. Duruy did not hesitate to criticise with great frankness the work of the Imperial author. On coming to a passage in which Cæsar was commended for having usurped the sovereign power, and it was asserted that when public order was in danger the usurpation of authority might become necessary, turning to his Majesty M. Duruy said: "I cannot allow this justification of a violation of law

Albert Mansfeld, a German writer. But the account in the text is the Emperor's own version of the origin of the manifesto. See also "Souvenirs du Second Empire," par M. Granier de Cassagnac, partie première, p. 53.

Digitized by Google

to pass without notice. There have been *coups d'État* —but we should try to forget them."

So far was the Emperor from showing any displeasure at this remark, made with great seriousness, that he smiled and said most amiably: "I quite agree with you—we will strike it out."

In the important duties that M. Duruy was not long afterward called upon to assume, and in the discharge of which he was often violently opposed by the clerical and reactionary sections of French society, and by certain members of the Government also, he never failed to obtain the most cordial co-operation and support of the Emperor, who seemed to take great delight in silencing the enemies of his high-minded and liberal Minister by a single phrase—"*Duruy est un honnête homme.*"

And the Emperor himself was *un honnête homme* also, when he said, "I quite agree with you." It is well known to those who were intimate with Napoleon III. that the *coup d'État* of the 2nd of December was an act for which he had no admiration, and to which he never referred except to excuse it. "My friends," he said, while living at Camden Place, "were often urging me to have some monument erected commemorative of this event; but notwithstanding that the *coup d'État* was afterward legalised by the votes of eight millions of Frenchmen, I refused to celebrate an action which, although in my opinion necessary, was nevertheless a violation of the law."

The Emperor disliked to have any one beat about the bush in the endeavour to persuade or convince

Digitized by Google

him. A straightforward, concise statement of the case without phrases was what he wanted. One day when I was with him, Dr. R——, who was attending his uncle, Jérôme, the ex-King of Westphalia, in some illness or other, came to report to him the condition of the patient. The Emperor, not wishing to have him come into the room, did not request him to do so, but asked him how his uncle was getting on. Standing by the open door, the Doctor described in learned language and ponderous technical terms, and at great length, the symptoms of the case and the condition of the patient. When he went away the Emperor turned to me and said: "I suppose all that—means that my uncle has a bad cold. Why didn't he say so simply, without that long-drawn-out scientific dissertation? He wished, I suppose, to impress me with a sense of his importance."

The Emperor was very tenacious of his opinions, but was an excellent listener to opinions not his own; he could even tolerate the talk of a dunce. Indeed, as has been very justly remarked, one of his most enviable characteristics was his patience with fools.

In a letter written to his cousin, Prince Napoleon, in 1849, he says: "I shall always strive to govern in the interest of the masses and not in those of a party. I honour the men who by their capacity and experience can give me good advice; I receive daily the most contradictory counsel; but I follow only the impulses of my reason and my heart."

He disliked discussion; but if he seemed to have very little desire to convince others, he rarely abandoned an idea or a purpose were it once entertained. To

Digitized by Google

his mother he was, when a child, the "gentle headstrong one" (*le doux entêté*)—so rarely was he insistent, so firmly he held to his purpose. If obstacles stood in his path he could wait for the opportune moment, but never forgot to act when the time came. It was very easy for him to give way; it was extremely hard for him to give up.

His persistency of belief in his destiny, in spite of repeated and disastrous failure—his fixity of purpose, even to the details of administration—in a word, the unflinching tenacity with which he held to whatever was a matter of conviction with him, and which was perhaps the most distinctive feature in the character of this very remarkable man, is strikingly illustrated by the following anecdote told by Sir Archibald Alison:

"The Duke of N—— said to me in 1854: 'Several years ago, before the Revolution of 1848, I met Louis Napoleon often at Brodick Castle in Arran. We frequently went out to shoot together. Neither cared much for the sport; and we soon sat down on a heathery brow of Goatfell and began to speak seriously. He always opened these conferences by discoursing on what he would do when *Emperor of France.* Among other things, he said he would obtain a grant from the Chamber to drain the marshes of the Bries, which, you know, once fully cultivated, became flooded when the inhabitants, who were chiefly Protestants, left the country on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. And what is very curious, I see in the newspapers of the day that he *has got a grant of two millions of francs from the Chamber, to begin the draining of these very marshes.*'"

Digitized by Google

The Emperor, while holding fast to what his judgment had approved, was slow to form opinions. He wished to examine every side of the question under consideration; and he commonly took the time to do so. He was very fond of asking questions about subjects in which he took an interest, of any one who he supposed might be able to throw light upon them—even if it were only a sidelight. This habit was doubtless, in part, a matter of temperament, but it was a habit that was strengthened by having a practical end in view—he wished to form his own opinions; and, consequently, to see for himself what was to be seen, and in doing this he liked particularly to look into the dark corners of things. Indeed, in all matters of public concern he sought for information, when he could, at first hand, with a view of obtaining such a direct and personal knowledge of things as would enable him, should there be occasion, to check off, as it were, the more formal information that came to him through official sources, and thus more clearly understand its real value and significance. Credited by the world with being an absolute and responsible sovereign, he had no wish to be the slave of his own bureaucracy.

I shall have occasion elsewhere to speak at length of my relations to the Emperor as a source of information concerning matters with which I was personally acquainted and about which I was supposed to be well qualified to speak. But the habit above mentioned may be illustrated by the following incident:

In the winter of 1868–69 the Hon. Anson Burlingame came to Paris at the head of a special and

Digitized by Google

very important Chinese Mission. Mr. Burlingame was a warm personal friend of mine, and, from the moment of his arrival in the French capital, I saw him almost every day. Just before, or soon after, the Mission reached Europe, I spoke to his Majesty about it, saying that Mr. Burlingame was an old acquaintance and friend. "Oh," said he, "I wish you would tell me who he is, and just what the object of this Mission is." "Sire," I replied, "I can tell you at once who Mr. Burlingame is, but I fear that I cannot tell you now just what he hopes to accomplish here." "Very well," said his Majesty, "I wish then you would find out why this Mission has been created—what powers it has, what it has done, and what is wanted of us, and let me know. Put any facts you have to give me in writing—not at great length, but summarily."

It will be easily understood that I had no difficulty in obtaining the information desired. And very soon after our conversation, I had the pleasure of communicating it to his Majesty in the form he had requested.

When, subsequently, this Mission entered into official relations with the French Government, and its proposals became the subject of deliberations in the Imperial Council, his Majesty was thoroughly familiar with every aspect of the case.

The accurate knowledge the Emperor occasionally exhibited about things he was presumed to be quite ignorant of was very remarkable and, sometimes, the cause of great astonishment to his councillors. How he obtained his information was no secret to those who were acquainted with his habit of extracting informa-

Digitized by Google

tion from those that possessed it and were cognisant of the care and the persistence with which he studied, quite by himself and for himself, every subject that concerned the welfare of the people or the prestige of the Empire. In matters of action, especially, he desired to have nothing left to chance, but to have what was done, done with consideration—the contingencies, so far as possible, foreseen and properly provided for.

His prudence, his extreme caution even, was one of the most remarkable traits of his character—the one, perhaps, with which the general public is least familiar; for if it was a trait that few could fail to observe, it was commonly and wrongly supposed to indicate hesitancy and indecision rather than a clear sense of the unwisdom of acting without knowledge and without reflection. Moreover, his confidence in his destiny would seem to preclude the need of knowledge or of caution in the execution of the work he aimed to accomplish. But Louis Napoleon's trust in "destiny," like Cromwell's "trust in God," in no way lessened the strength of his conviction that it was very important at the same time to "keep the powder dry"; or the firmness of his belief in the assurance of a greater authority that—"faith without works is dead."

It may be safely said that he engaged in no serious undertaking without looking at it in all its aspects, and, if it was attended with risks and perils, without having weighed them carefully in his own mind. In consequence he was never taken unawares nor surprised by any event, and was thus morally able to accept and to bear all that fortune gave to him, whether of good or bad.

Digitized by Google

I presume that many—perhaps most—of the persons who have read the historical account of Louis Napoleon's attempt to capture the garrison at Strasbourg, in 1836, or the story of his expedition to Boulogne, made four years later, were astonished at the audacity of the Prince, and at the apparent absence of any just appreciation on his part of the very probable consequences of these attempts. To some persons they have doubtless seemed to be the acts of a man who was mad. And they might be properly so characterised had they been determined by the facts and conditions then existing, as understood by the world at large. But no man was more sane or perspicacious than he when he made these attempts to overthrow the Government of Louis Philippe, single-handed, but in the name of his uncle. He then clearly perceived how profoundly the memory of Napoleon was cherished by the French people, and correctly estimated the feebleness of the monarchy, and the incomparable power of that sovereignty of which he was the living representative. A few years later the whole world saw that he had committed no error of judgment, but was right when he believed himself to be strong enough to revive in France the system of Napoleon—an Imperial democracy—if he could but obtain a foothold in his country. He knew perfectly well that any endeavour to do this forcibly would be attended with great risks; and they were carefully counted, but calmly regarded.

If he failed to accomplish his purpose at Strasbourg, and again at Boulogne, it was not because the scheme itself was not feasible, but because its success was

Digitized by Google

made impossible, in each case, by the misunderstandings and blunders of those who were more directly responsible for its execution.

These revolutionary attempts were certainly audacious. What makes them still more remarkable is the clairvoyant judgment of the political situation in France that prompted them, and the cool deliberation with which they were planned or plotted.

This same trait of character—his extreme cautiousness—could not be better illustrated than by an incident that occurred at the time of the Paris Exposition of 1867, and which was reported to me by my friend, Dr. C——. "I had come," said he, "one morning quite early to the pavilion containing the United States Sanitary Commission's exhibit. As there was no one in the building, and very few people were in the grounds at that hour, I took a cigar from my pocket, lighted it, and sat down to look over a morning paper. I had been seated but a moment, when I heard an unusual trampling of feet on the gravel walk near by, and on looking up to discover the cause of this commotion, I saw a gentleman approaching the open door of the pavilion, quite alone, but followed at a short distance by two others, behind whom, a little farther away, a crowd of people had gathered. Recognising instantly who my visitor was, I hastily laid on a table that stood conveniently near me my freshly lighted cigar, and stepped forward to meet the Emperor. He greeted me with a pleasant smile, and addressing me in English, said: 'Is this the collection of Dr. Evans?' I told him that it was; and then he immediately began to ask me questions

Digitized by Google

about the objects near him. Passing on from one to another, we moved slowly around the room—he evidently quite interested in what he saw and heard, and I greatly delighted to have an opportunity to explain these things to so distinguished a visitor. Finally we came to the beautiful model of one of the United States Army post hospitals that stood upon a broad, wooden table covered with green cloth. I was quite proud of this model, and particularly invited the attention of his Majesty to it, and began to talk very enthusiastically about it and the great hospital it so admirably represented. But suddenly I stopped speaking, for I observed that his Majesty was not listening to me, nor even looking at the model. His eyes were fastened upon another object; and then, to my astonishment, I saw him reach out his hand and with thumb and finger pick up the cigar I had just laid down, and place it, with the half-inch of white ashes still sticking to the end, on the hard, solid base of the model.

" My confusion can be imagined when, after having thus disposed of the cause of offence, the Emperor turned to me, and with a quizzical expression on his face, and in the gentlest possible tone of voice, said: 'I think it would be *safer* there, don't you? You see, the cloth on which it lay is inflammable, and so is the table under it. And if by chance they should take fire—as the pavilion is constructed wholly of light wood and cloth, and the buildings that are grouped around it are equally frail and combustible—it would be impossible to tell what a disaster might follow—*n'est-ce pas?*'

Digitized by Google

"Of course, I entirely agreed with his Majesty that it would be a calamity to have this splendid Exposition brought to an end in such a way. And he smiled again most complaisantly, evidently greatly amused at my ill-concealed embarrassment.

"He had, however, given me a lesson, which I am sure I accepted at the time with due humility, and which I have never since forgotten—namely, be always mindful that a little spark may kindle a great flame, and act accordingly.

"And when the Emperor had gone—'No,' I said to myself, 'M. Thiers may launch his sarcasms and M. Émile de Girardin may rave, but there will be no war between France and Prussia about this Luxembourg question. The man who is so far-seeing, so cautious, so apprehensive even of the consequences that might follow from what would seem to most men a trifle, is not likely to risk his throne over this miserable affair—if he can help it. And, as he has the power in his own hands, the peace of Europe will be preserved.'

"And it was preserved."

His cautiousness, his slowness, his hesitancy to come to a decision were in striking contrast with the boldness and swiftness with which he acted when he had finally decided upon the course to be taken, and felt that the opportune moment had come. Having resolved to accomplish a purpose, to reach an object, he was prompt to move. Were the undertaking difficult or dangerous to execute, his activity was prodigious, his self-control extraordinary, and the reserve of energy upon which he drew

Digitized by Google

apparently inexhaustible. Then it was that his nature seemed to be entirely transformed, and the man who was as tender-hearted as a woman in the presence of suffering, and who shrank from pain like a child, could act without feebleness and endure without a murmur.

Absolutely fearless when the time for action came, but deliberate, cautious, and careful at every step that led to it—such was Napoleon III.

He was always the complete master of his own thoughts and emotions. Generally grave and serious, he could not only be amused and join in the merriment of the hour, but could, on occasion, laugh as heartily as any one. He was quick to see the comic features of an incident or situation, and often greatly enjoyed a witticism or an epigram. He was, however, himself too polite and too kind to be clever at the expense of the feelings of others. His unwillingness to give pain to others occasionally led him to show what was thought to be feebleness. But, as he was capable of acts requiring him to ignore the promptings of sentiments, so, too, when he felt called upon to say what he thought, no one could exceed him in the keenness of his sarcasm or the sharpness of his retort. For instance, Prince Napoleon having petulantly remarked to him that he had nothing of his uncle (the first Emperor) about him, he replied, "You are quite mistaken. I have his family."

Or when, on a certain occasion, having been told that the Count de Chambord had said that in case he should come to the throne he intended to secure the

Digitized by Google

services of all the clever people that Napoleon III. had gathered about him, he quickly retorted, "Ah, indeed! If he should secure the services of *all* the clever people who have gathered about me his reign would be a very short one."

But his repartees were generally of the most amiable kind. What would disturb the equanimity of most men was to him only the occasion for a pleasantry. For example, a little rascal having driven his hoop against him while he was walking in the Bois de Boulogne, on being stopped by an *aide-de-camp* and told that it was the Emperor he had hit, answered back, "I don't care if it is, my father says he is a great scamp." One can imagine the amazement of those who heard the speech of this *enfant terrible*. "Who is your father?" he was at once asked.

"No," said the Emperor, "I do not wish to know; and besides," laughing aloud, "it is forbidden in the *Code* to inquire who the father is."

The instant reply on this occasion, "I do not wish to know," reveals like a flash of light the true character of the man behind the impertransible countenance the Emperor habitually wore. He never wished to know who his personal enemies were or what they said about him. He frequently surprised and vexed his intimate friends by the kind things he said of men who had grossly abused him; and astonished and annoyed them, perhaps, still more by the favours he was ready to accord to these men and the official positions he offered to them and actually placed them in.

He possessed in an unusual degree the gift of

Digitized by Google

making graceful little speeches on the spur of the moment, to meet a dilemma, to pay a compliment, or to protect a friend. At a ball given at the Tuileries a general, slipping upon the polished floor, was so unlucky as to fall at the Emperor's feet, pulling down with him his partner. The awkwardness of the situation and the embarrassment and mortification of the officer can easily be imagined. "Madame," said the Emperor, as he assisted the lady to rise, "this is the second time General —— has fallen in my presence; the first time was at Solférino."

The dignity and habitual reticence which caused him to be often spoken of as "a sphinx" by those who did not know him intimately, gave a special saliency to these impromptu expressions of intelligent interest and kindly feeling. It is true they frequently were not comprehended by those who heard them, for the very reason that they were so unexpected.

He was always a refined gentleman in his dealings with men, whoever they might be. It is well known that in the Boulogne affair the Prince had the promised support of a number of persons of high rank. But when my friend, the late Henry Wikoff, on the death of one of them wrote to the Emperor, asking permission to mention his relations to this person at the time referred to, the Emperor, in a letter written in answer to this request, said: "But it is my desire also that even the dead should not be named; for that might be disagreeable to those who are still living." He preferred to have nothing said rather than to permit, perchance, the feelings of any one to be unnecessarily wounded.

Digitized by Google

It having been reported to him that Jules Favre had made a number of false declarations for the purpose of concealing certain facts relating to his domestic life, and that, if the matter were brought before the courts, his most bitter and persistent opponent might be silenced for ever—"Stop your inquiries," said he; "to attempt to destroy the reputation of this man in such a way would be a detestable thing."

When in the bitterness of his defeat—a prisoner—M. Guizot, in letters addressed to the London *Times* in the autumn of 1870, grossly misrepresented his opinions, conduct, and responsibilities with regard to the war, the Empress, justly indignant, sent a dispatch to him at Wilhelmshöhe, in which she suggested that the answer should be the publication of certain correspondence between the Guizots and himself. The Emperor telegraphed back immediately: "I forbid you to mention a word of it. M. Guizot is an illustrious Frenchman. I have helped him. I do not confer favours in order that they may become arms against my enemies. Not a word."

These were the sayings of a genuine man—of one of Plutarch's men—the greatness of whose character is to be measured not in the line of historical achievement but by the qualities of his soul.

His good-nature was never ruffled by trifles; a casual mistake of no real moment—a delay, some failure of accomplishment, the *maladresse* of an attendant or of a servant—was rarely noticed. He had too keen a sense of the relative importance of things. On one occasion, while at dinner, an awkward

Digitized by Google

waiter discharged a portion of the contents of a seltzer bottle in his face. The poor man was paralysed with terror; but his Majesty merely remarked that the levers of syphons were often treacherous. I cannot remember, at this moment, any trifling inadvertence that really seemed to annoy him except the neglect of a person leaving his room to close the door he had opened. But a failure of duty, an obvious carelessness or lack of order, even in the smallest matter, seldom if ever escaped his notice; and he often directed the attention of the person at fault to the expediency of more painstaking.

Kings, and Presidents even, are apt to be troubled by the contentions and rivalries among those who surround them, and who are made jealous by every preferment of favour granted. The Imperial Court, being a new establishment, was very often disturbed, as was to have been expected, by the grumbling of unsatisfied ambitions, and the more or less malicious gossip, and the petty manifestations of spite that are seldom absent where the vanities of the world are on exhibition. But the grumblers and the gossips received no encouragement from Napoleon III. Scandals he would not tolerate. Contentions over personal matters annoyed him. He wished to have all those about him living together in harmony and fraternity. He was the peacemaker of the palace. I could give many instances within my knowledge in which he so acted. But none is so striking, so eminently characteristic of the man, as the one in which he appeared as a peacemaker at Sedan.

After the raising of the white flag the Emperor

Digitized by Google

sent for Generals Ducrot and de Wimpfen, requesting them to meet him at the Sub-Prefecture. There these two Commanders-in-chief, immediately they met, regardless of the awful situation—the dead and the dying lying around them on every side—and of the urgency of coming to a conclusion quickly and sanely, began to indulge in violent recriminations; and each, disclaiming his own responsibility for the disaster, proceeded to place the blame upon the other. Both men were greatly excited and seemed ready to seize each other by the throat. The scene was pitiful in the extreme. Then it was that the Emperor, a sad witness of this wretched conflict—himself without a command, but upon whom all the responsibility had fallen—came forward to intervene, and soothe with conciliatory words the wounded pride or vanity of his generals.

"We have all done our best, as best we understood it, and as we best could. Don't let us forget the duties we still owe to ourselves, to the army, to France, and to humanity."

It is infinitely pathetic, this attitude of the defeated sovereign, his calmness, his forgetfulness of self, his concern for the peace of mind—for the *amour propre* even—of others; and above all the large way in which he sought to look at things when grief and sorrow were eating his heart away.

The Emperor often seemed to be lost in abstraction, thinking about, or looking at, something afar off; and, apparently, paying no attention to the conversation or discussion that was going on around him,

Digitized by Google

when, to the great surprise of every one, a sudden, forcible remark, or a sharp criticism revealed the fact that he had been a most attentive listener.

It has often been said that the imperturbability of the Emperor was a mask "put on"; that in fact he was exceedingly emotional and impulsive, but had schooled himself to conceal his feelings and dominate the strongest momentary inclination; that even his slowness and hesitancy of speech, the habit of partly closing his eyes, and his appearance of detachment were mannerisms acquired, and not original and genuine characteristics. These statements, while perhaps not absolutely untrue, are fallacious and misleading.

It is my belief that the phlegm of the Emperor was entirely natural—in brief, that he was to the manner born. The subjection in which he was able to hold his emotions and feelings, if remarkable in degree, was certainly not unusual in kind. The dominance of the passions over the reflective facilities, so characteristic of youth and inexperience, is commonly presumed to end when the natural processes of mental development have been completed and the age of discretion has been reached. It is quite true that the Emperor possessed a mind always sensitive and emotional in a high degree, but it was a mind that in its maturity was governed by a powerful will directed by intelligence, experience, and reason; and it was to this same will also that he was indebted for his apparently inexhaustible powers of physical endurance. His habits of thinking—his abstraction—his reticence—his peculiarities of manner, all his distinctive personal traits of character, were the products or visible forms of his

Digitized by Google

temperament—a temperament that was stamped upon every lineament of his face, and which it was as impossible for him to put off as it would have been to put on.

That his imperturbability and wonderful power of self-control made it extremely difficult to divine his inmost thoughts is unquestionably true. But a ruler of men is under no obligation to confess himself to those around him, or to tell the world what he thinks about everything, however curious everybody may be to discover it; and a man who is able to keep his opinion to himself is much more likely to owe this ability to the possession of a sound and well-disciplined mind, than to the use of a mask—a word that connotes intentional deception and, consequently, weakness rather than a prudent and legitimate reserve.

His mental and moral equipoise was perfect. When returning from Bordeaux, in 1852, he made his entry into Paris and was hailed as "Augustus" by the enthusiastic people, and as the "saviour" of his country by the Municipal Council, and the re-establishment of the Empire having been demanded, he knew that he was about to realise the supreme object of his ambition, not the slightest change in his deportment was visible to those who were nearest to him. And at Metz, when the news of the defeats of MacMahon and Frossard fell at headquarters like a thunderbolt, to fill it with consternation and to destroy the self-possession of all about him, we are told that "his was the only cool head."

The masterful composure of Napoleon III., in

Digitized by Google

every situation and circumstance, was no concealing mask to be put on and put off, but a quality of the mind that reveals very clearly the intellectual elevation, the moral force, and the commanding character of the man.

In this connection I may say that the usual expression on his face, when Prince-President, was one of absolute serenity. When Emperor, his features, although always perfectly composed, became more and more grave, giving to him the air of a man who was constantly thinking of great and serious things. After his days of grandeur and power, when an exile in his modest home at Chislehurst, his countenance wore the expression of a man at peace with himself, and his manner was that of the profound thinker who, notwithstanding a shade of sadness often noticeable in his features or his voice, still esteemed himself superior to the accidents of fortune.

Although he seemed phlegmatic and hesitating, and uncertain in his ordinary conversation, and to possess a rather weak voice, when once aroused he no longer hesitated and his utterance was forcible. He expressed his thought with directness, and on occasion with eloquence. His addresses before official assemblies or on ceremonial occasions were pronounced or read by him with great effect. As a public speaker he had a remarkably good voice—smooth, flexible, sonorous, and full in volume—which he used with skill, and his enunciation was so distinct that no word was lost. He seldom made use of gestures but stood firmly on his feet, and in complete possession of himself. His speaking or reading left upon those who

Digitized by Google

heard him an impression of power. Its vocal effect was very much like that produced by the reading of his great and implacable enemy—Victor Hugo.

In religion the Emperor was a Catholic, and was careful to comply with the formal observances of his Church. But he was a liberal Catholic—a Gallican and not a Ultramontane—and looked with sympathy and favour on every historical religious confession. He advocated religious liberty everywhere, and gave directions that intolerance, in matters of religious opinion and worship, should not be permitted either in France or in the dependencies of the Empire.

"Everywhere, indeed, where I can," he once said, "I exert myself to enforce and propagate religious ideas—but not to please a party."

In "Les Idées Napoléoniennes," Prince Louis, referring to his uncle, says: "He re-established religion, but without making the clergy a means of government." And one of the questions he imagines that Napoleon might ask, were he to return to France, was: "Have you kept the clergy strictly within the limits of their religious duties, and away from political power?"

It was because of these liberal views with respect to religious confessions and the relations of the Church to the State, that the Emperor never ceased to be suspected of a lack of fidelity to the Papal authority, whether temporal or spiritual, and was often assailed with extreme violence by the militant representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. Every one knows how abhorrent to M. Louis Veuillot and his friends

Digitized by Google

was the effective work of the Emperor in behalf of the kingdom of Italy; but perhaps few now remember that his equally successful effort at home to keep the educational institutions of France free from the mildew of clericalism was equally productive of angry protest on the part of the ultra-Catholic party.

But while he continued scrupulously to observe the terms of the convention that established the relations between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in France, he must frequently have been reminded of the admission of his uncle, who, in enumerating the mistakes he had made, said: "*Mais le Concordat est la plus grande faute de ma vie.*"

In fact, the hostility of the reactionary wing of the French Catholic Church to the policy of Napoleon III., contributed directly and powerfully to the overthrow of the Second Empire. And this was finally accomplished, when the French Democracy, under the political leadership of Delescluze and Leon Gambetta, effected a junction with French clericalism, under the military leadership of General Trochu.[1]

[1] The depth of the dislike of the Emperor, on the part of the reactionary elements of the Roman Church, is even less manifest in the bitter attacks openly directed against the measures and the policy of the Imperial Government than in the insidious and persistent efforts of the militant champions of the Papacy to teach the people that Napoleon III. was an enemy of the Church. And it is particularly through the schools and among the young that they have thus endeavoured to prejudice public opinion. For example: In the last edition of the "Histoire de France à l'usage de la jeunesse," revised and completed by M. l'Abbé Courval, superior of the seminary of Séez, Paris, 1873, Napoleon III. is spoken of as follows: "The Emperor, while pretending that he wished to preserve the temporal power of the Holy See, permitted the Pope to

Digitized by Google

I think, however, that the Emperor was more inclined to look upon the Church as an important—a necessary—social institution, than to regard it as the keeper of the keys of heaven. And yet he was a firm believer in the Kingdom of God. His fatalism was not a blind determinism, but a religious faith. It had its origin in a deep and abiding conviction that every man is an instrument in the hands of God for a purpose; and he was fully persuaded that he himself—like Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon—had been providentially chosen to fulfil a mission, and that every act and every event of his life, every failure and every success, was a necessary and inevitable part of it.

The strong and almost mystical belief that he had a mission and that it would be accomplished to the end, in spite of any human agency, was never more strikingly manifested than when, after the failure of the attempt to assassinate him made by Pianori—who on the 28th of April, 1855, discharged a revolver twice, almost in his face—the Senate came to the Tuileries in a body to congratulate him on his providential escape. "I thank you," said the Emperor, "but I do not fear in the least the attempts of assassins. There are beings who are the instruments of the decrees of Providence. So long as I shall not have accomplished my mission, I incur no danger."

be despoiled of his States by piecemeal; while France, the eldest daughter of the Church, stood by with arms in her hands, for more than ten years a witness of the consummation of this iniquitous sacrilege. Nor was it long before he received his chastisement"; and so forth.—*Op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 387.

Digitized by Google

And he spoke then as he always spoke when expressing this belief, quietly, and with no show of that tremendous sense of his own importance in the economy of the universe which characterises most men who fancy they have a mission in the world.

I never had any reason to suppose that the Emperor could with justice be charged with vanity. At least he was free from that kind which, he himself often admitted, was the characteristic French foible; for his vanities were impersonal, and had a purpose. But he was proud, very proud. He knew that he was a Bonaparte. His reverence for his famous uncle had in it something more than respect for the prodigious genius of the man; he felt that he was the heir, and the legitimate and sole heir, to all he possessed; that in him had been incarnated the spirit of Napoleon; and that it was not only his business and his duty, but that he had been born under Providence, to be the propagator of the ideas of his uncle, and the reconstructor and continuator of his work.

His foster-sister, Madame Cornu, used to relate a little incident that shows how early he became imbued with the Napoleonic legend.

Having remarked that Louis when a child was of a most amiable and generous disposition, she went on to say that one day, when they were playing together—he being about ten or twelve years old—he spoke of the great Emperor, and told her what he was going to do when he grew up to be a man; and that when she laughed at something he had said, he did not seem to take offence, and soon after invited her very

Digitized by Google

pleasantly to walk with him towards the foot of the garden, but that on turning into a side-path, where they were out of sight, he suddenly seized her arm with both hands and, with an expression of intense anger on his face, cried out, "Hortense, if you don't take that back I'll break your arm."

If he never forgot a kindness, he never forgot an injury, and was as sensitive as a woman to a personal offence. When, on the re-establishment of the Imperial dynasty, the Emperor Nicholas declined, in acknowledging the announcement of this event, to address him as "*Mon frère*," according to diplomatic usage, but used instead the words "*Mon ami*," the Emperor was cut to the quick. It is true he is said to have taken the affront very calmly, and to have been moved only to remark that "Heaven gives us our brothers, but we can choose our friends." However this may be, I am quite sure that at the time he regarded the form of address chosen by the Russian Emperor as an intended indignity to be dealt with only and properly by a prompt suspension of diplomatic relations. He finally accepted the Russian letter; but I am inclined to think that he never forgot the form of address nor forgave it—although too proud to acknowledge that he thought it worthy of notice. It has been said that had the Czar, on this occasion, addressed the Emperor as "*Mon frère*," there would have been no Crimean war; and it is equally probable that the remembrance of the reluctant and conditional recognition of the Imperial title—"Napoleon III." on the part of Austria and Prussia, may have strongly predisposed the Emperor

Digitized by Google

to the wars he subsequently waged with these two Powers.

In 1859, not long before war was declared against Austria, the Emperor wrote to Walewski, his Minister for Foreign Affairs: "Strong as is my love for everything that is great and noble, I would tread under my feet reason itself, were reason to wear the garb of pusillanimity. Although I may say the contrary, I have deeply graven upon my heart the tortures of St. Helena and the disaster of Waterloo. It is now thirty years that these memories have been gnawing at my heart. They have caused me to face without regret death and captivity. They would cause me to confront something greater yet—the future of my country." What a self-characterisation! How suggestive of what was to come!

But it was his pride that enabled him to support with such sovereign dignity all the humiliations that befell him after the destruction of his armies and the loss of his throne. Whatever weakness he may have shown as Emperor, as a dethroned monarch his conduct was irreproachable. His real greatness and magnanimity, his elevation of mind and moral courage were made evident by what he did and said at Sedan, and when a prisoner; but still more, not only then, but afterward when in exile, by what he did not do and did not say. He accepted his responsibilities fully. He made no attempt to lay the blame on others for the disasters which followed each other with such frightful rapidity, from the opening of the war to the capitulation at Sedan. He never excused himself, although ready to excuse his generals and his political advisers.

Digitized by Google

If the ambition of Napoleon III. was equal to that of the first Napoleon, it was less personal and more scrupulous; he sought nothing for himself alone, and to him the most glorious victories were the victories of peace; but his pride was greater and more noble. If ambition led to the downfall of the first Napoleon, pride may have been the cause of his own downfall; but it also finally preserved him from railing against both men and fate, after the manner of his uncle; and, by enabling him to live with honour and to die with dignity, it has secured to him the sympathy of the world. Unmoved by calumny, silent under criticism, the serenity—the superb stoicism—with which Napoleon III. accepted his destiny makes him one of the most remarkable characters in history.

The story of his life moves along from the beginning to its very end with the perfect unity of action of a Greek tragedy.

"Nature prepared him for the part he was to take," says M. Granier de Cassagnac, "by endowing him with qualities that are the opposites of our faults: we seldom listen, he listened attentively; we rarely reflect, he was meditating incessantly; we get angry with men and with things; he was gentle in his dealings with persons and events. Such a character was beneath neither the grandeur nor the perils of the situation, for he joined to the power that at a glance takes the measures of obstacles, the courage that encounters them and the patience that wears them down."

If the career of Napoleon III. was extraordinary, no less extraordinary were the qualities of head and heart with which nature had endowed him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

THE MARRIAGE OF THE EMPEROR

Louis Napoleon is advised to marry—The Princess Caroline—The Duchess of Hamilton—Ancient and modern Knights—The Duke of Hamilton—A great surprise—Eugénie de Montijo; her character, her person—The Emperor announces his engagement—How the announcement was received—The marriage ceremony—My first visit to the Empress at the Tuileries—A little incident—The Empress does not forget her old friends—Pepa—The character of Eugénie de Montijo unchanged by her elevation to a throne—Criticism—The fortune of the Imperial family—The demands upon the privy purse—The generosity of the Empress—Her first act after her engagement—Her visits to the cholera hospitals—"Pious but not bigoted"—Her public liberalities—The house parties at Compiègne—The Empress a lover of the things of the mind—The Suez Canal—The character of the Empress described by the Emperor—The Empress not exempt from the defects of her qualities.

VERY soon after the *coup d'État* the friends of the Prince, as well as the Government officials, began to urge for reasons of State the importance and even the necessity of his marriage. M. Thayer, the husband of the daughter of General Bertrand, the companion of Napoleon at St. Helena, said to me one day, "I have just seen the Prince and told him he must now get married, have a family, and found a dynasty in order to continue and perpetuate the name

Digitized by Google

of Napoleon. I told him that he should do this as soon as possible." Then he went on to say that the Prince, pulling at his moustache, as was his habit, replied, "I will marry; but as for founding a dynasty, that I cannot promise."

It was not without a struggle that the Prince consented to break away from old attachments that had been sealed by personal sacrifices and magnanimous acts in his behalf; nor was it easy for him to come to a determination which involved a complete change in his habits of living. He yielded, however, to the counsel of his friends.

The question now was, whom should he marry? And it was one that interested a great many persons, each of whom had some Royal or Imperial princess to propose. What intrigues there were to find a wife for the Prince, planned by people who wished to closely connect themselves with the Court of the future!

But of all these proposed matches there was only one that for a time seemed probable. The Duchess of Hamilton—who was the daughter of Stéphanie (Beauharnais), the Grand Duchess of Baden, and a cousin of Louis Napoleon, and consequently in a position to speak to him very frankly—advised him to marry a Royal princess, and commended to him her niece, Caroline, the daughter of Prince Vasa, son of Gustavus IV., King of Sweden. Prince Vasa was then in exile—a Field-Marshal in the service of the Emperor of Austria. He was without fortune; but his daughter had been brought up at Carlsruhe and Baden-Baden, and it had long been the wish of the

Digitized by Google

old Duchess Stéphanie to make a great marriage for this favourite granddaughter. With this idea she had canvassed the chances of making her the wife of most of the hereditary princes of Europe.

The attention of Prince Louis was therefore turned to the eligibility of this Princess, and the great advantage it would be to him to be allied to so many powerful Royal families, both German and Swedish, Catholic and Protestant. It was considered that such an alliance would greatly strengthen his position. The Princess herself was all that could be desired, suitable in age, charming in personal appearance, intelligent, and educated in a superior manner. Such was the match proposed to him by his family, or by one relative to whom he was greatly attached, since he and the Princess Mary had spent much time together in their early days, both in Germany and elsewhere.

The intimate relations of these two cousins, and the natural gallantry and romantic temperament of the Prince are shown in a very striking and interesting manner in the following incident:

One day Prince Louis Napoleon, while on a visit to the Grand Duchess, was walking on the banks of the Rhine with this cousin and her sisters Louise and Josephine, when the conversation turned upon the gallantry of men in former times. The Princess Mary extolled in the strongest terms the chivalry of those days when the knight took for his motto, "God, my King, and my Lady," and insisted that men had sadly degenerated in modern times. The Prince denied this, and asserted that in all times knightly

Digitized by Google

devotion was never wanting towards a lady who was worthy of inspiring it, and that the French, at least, had not degenerated, but were as brave and chivalric as their ancestors.

Just then a gust of wind blew from the hat of his cousin, Princess Louise, a flower, which fell into the river.

"There!" said the Princess Mary, as the flower drifted off into the stream, "what a chance for a knight of the olden time to show his courage and devotion!"

"Ah!" said the Prince, "is that a challenge? Well, I accept it"—and, before a word could be spoken, he plunged into the water, dressed as he was. One can easily imagine the consternation and alarm of the young ladies. But if the Prince yielded to an audacious caprice, he knew the measure of his strength; and he swam out boldly into the stream until he reached the flower, when, having seized it, he turned towards the shore and breasted the current that beat against him, and threatened for a moment to sweep him into the rapids below. With a few strong strokes he extricated himself from the suction of the rapidly moving water and gained a foothold. Clambering up the bank, dripping and somewhat out of breath, he walked up to his cousin Mary, and with a polite bow, addressing her, said: "I have proved to you the sincerity of my belief. Here is the flower, my fair cousin, but," with a shiver, for it was in the winter that this happened, "for Heaven's sake I beg of you henceforth to forget your ancient knights."

Two years after this adventure the Princess Louise

Digitized by Google

married Gustavus Vasa, and the Princess Caroline was her daughter; and Josephine, who married Antoine Prince of Hohenzollern, was the mother of Prince Leopold, who by a strange fatality, as the instrument of Bismarck, finally brought about the downfall of Napoleon III., his mother's cousin, and the destruction of the Second Empire.[1]

I can, without indiscretion or a breach of confidence, say that a marriage would have been the consequence of the deep attachment existing between these two young people had not the ambitious mother of the Princess positively prohibited the match. I have been assured of her saying that she doubted if Louis would ever be in a position worthy of her daughter Mary. The old duchess had always been kind to the Prince; she was sincerely fond of him, and often invited him to see her; but it was not her wish that he should marry her daughter—his uncertain future being an insuperable obstacle. She was eager for money, as the family had not much themselves; hence Mary's subsequent marriage with the Duke of Hamilton, who was not royal, but rich and powerful in his own country.

By way of parenthesis, I may mention here the singular fact that, when the Duke of Hamilton, years afterward, had the misfortune to fall down the entire flight of stairs at the Maison Dorée in Paris, striking his head on each step as he fell, and was carried to the Hotel Bristol in a terrible state, it was the Empress Eugénie who visited him, sitting by his side, doing all she could for him, and nursing him like

[1] See Appendix I.

Digitized by Google

a sister. Indeed, she took care of him until his death, for the duchess only arrived at Paris some days after the accident. Happily, she came soon enough to see the duke in a lucid moment, in which he entreated her forgiveness for his many shortcomings; and it was well that he did so, since there was a great deal for her to forgive, which she willingly did.

In these painful circumstances the Empress was admirable. She left everything at the Tuileries to attend to the duke.

So then it was the Princess Mary, Duchess of Hamilton, his cousin who proposed the Princess of Vasa as the future Empress.

Prince Louis knew that I had seen much of this Princess; for I was often at the Court at Carlsruhe, being rather a favourite of the Regent, Frederick William, whom I knew, as well as the Princess Louise, before their marriage—the latter especially as a girl at the Anlagen-Schloss near Coblentz, where the then Prince of Prussia and his wife, the Princess Augusta, spent a considerable part of each year with their daughter, Louise, and their son, Frederick—afterward the Grand Duchess Louise, and the Emperor, Frederick the Noble.

It is therefore, perhaps, not remarkable that he should have questioned me about the Princess, and asked my opinion of her suitability as a wife for him. He had heard much; but he was not a man to be deceived by profuse recommendations and praises, and he wanted my opinion on some points—an opinion which he knew he would get from me

Digitized by Google

honestly and specifically. Even then the Prince showed the honourable qualities of his finer nature. He did not wish to be deceived upon a most important question—what were the real feelings of the Princess herself on the subject of marrying him? He knew he was much older than she, and had been educated differently, and that perhaps her feeling was only one of passive acquiescence in her aunt's and mother's scheme. So to me he entrusted the task of finding out the real sentiments of the lady towards him; as also something more of her education, temperament, health, and so forth.

I accordingly went to Carlsruhe, and there had a long conversation with the Princess, and more especially with Madame E. Steinberg, her principal lady-in-waiting and *gouvernante*. I was convinced from what was said to me that the Princess was delighted at the thought of this marriage, and I found that she had thoroughly acquainted herself with the life and character of the man she had decided to marry—for decided she was.

I was, therefore, scarcely surprised when, upon bidding me goodbye, she said with a smile, "*Au revoir. À Paris.*" She evidently considered the question settled. And, as I knew of no personal disqualifications, I naturally thought so also. On my return to Paris, I reported to the Prince all that had occurred.

He now proposed to pay a visit to Baden-Baden to see the Princess and, in person, ask her hand in marriage. The time for the visit was fixed; and a few days later the Prince left Paris, stopping at

Digitized by Google

Strasbourg. From there he went to Baden-Baden and met the Grand Duchess Stéphanie and her daughters, and also the Princess Caroline. The marriage was considered by the Prince himself to be no longer in doubt, although, at this time, no formal offer had been made on either side. This was to follow upon the return of the Prince to Paris, after certain questions in regard to settlements and other necessary matters had been arranged.

All was progressing favourably, when a great surprise took place. Word came from the Grand Duchess Stéphanie that she had reconsidered the matter of the marriage of her granddaughter, and that the hand of Princess Caroline had been promised to Prince Albert, who was the heir to the throne of Saxony.

What was the cause of this sudden *volte-face?* The excuse given was a previous engagement more or less definite. The motive was political, no doubt. It was certainly an afterthought, dictated in response to German wishes. It is generally believed that the opposition to the marriage came from Austria. The father of the Princess was not opposed to it; but, having sought the consent of the Austrian Court to which he was attached, it is reported that Francis Joseph gave him to understand that, remembering the fate of two Austrian archduchesses, Marie Antoinette and Marie Louise, he was not disposed to approve of a marriage with a French prince.

The rupture of these matrimonial negotiations was a cause of humiliation both to the Prince and the Princess, since matters had advanced so far. But

Digitized by Google

the Prince accepted the situation without a word of complaint, and seemed to feel that he, after all, had been fortunate, and had escaped "embarrassing alliances," as he called them. Believing implicitly in his destiny, he did not permit what some would term an insult to disturb him.

"If," said he, "the royal families of Europe do not want me among them, it is better for me. It certainly is hardly consistent for us Napoleons, who are of plebeian origin, to seek alliances with families whose distinctions come to them by Divine right."

So ended the dream of the excellent Princess Mary, Duchess of Hamilton, and others, among whom was my friend, Madame Thayer. But I do not think that the Prince was seriously disappointed. Princess Caroline had been, to a certain extent, imposed upon him. He had promised to marry some one, and, having himself no one in view, she was the most eligible princess proposed to him. Time also pressed, for he was getting on in years —he was then forty-four years old.

Once, however, started upon this marriage project, the one of *convenance* having failed, it proved to be a case of the *premier pas qui coûte*, for he was determined now to marry, and this time to choose his consort himself, without any regard to her being a princess born—as his uncle had done when he chose to marry the beautiful Vicomtesse de Beauharnais —the Prince's own grandmother, the Empress Josephine—the *real* Empress, not the Austrian.

In the autumn of 1851 I made the acquaintance of

Digitized by Google

a Spanish family, consisting of three persons, a lady and two daughters.

One of the daughters was remarkable, not only because of her great beauty, but also on account of her vivacity and intelligence; and those who knew her intimately still more admired the kindness of her heart and her sympathy with all who were suffering or needy.

The first proof which I had of this trait of her character was an act of charity towards some poor Spanish exiles who were living in the United States. She asked me to send to them, from time to time, small amounts of money and presents of more or less value, which, as I have since ascertained, were taken from her economies. The manner in which she transmitted her gifts was so ingenuous and considerate, and her whole behaviour was so free from ostentation, that I soon recognised Eugénie de Montijo, Countess of Téba—this was the name of the young lady[1]—to be one of the few persons who give simply on account of the inclination of their heart, and who do not allow their left hand to know what their right hand does.

She was living at the time at No. 12 Place Vendôme, not far from my office, and came to see me generally accompanied by a friend, Madame

[1] The name of the young lady was Marie Eugénie de Guzman, her father, the Count de Téba, having taken the title of Count de Montijo only on the death of an elder brother. The name entered in the preamble of her marriage certificate is Eugénie Guzman, therefore the name Eugénie *de Montijo* is incorrect, although it has the sanction of French usage. See Appendix II.

Digitized by Google

Zifrey Casas, a lady of American parentage who had married in Spain, or by her faithful attendant, Pepa.

The many visits which I received from the young Countess, partly on account of her interest in her countrymen across the Atlantic, and partly because she wished to obtain my professional advice and assistance, gave me a good opportunity to form an opinion of her character.

Emotional, sympathetic, generous, quick to be moved by the impulse of the moment, thinking little of herself, she always seemed, during these early days of my acquaintance with her, to be most happy when she could render a service to others.

One day it happened that while the young lady was with other professional visitors in my waiting-room there was also present a friend of the Prince-President of the French Republic. This gentleman being much pressed for time, the Countess of Téba, waiving her right of precedence, permitted to enter first into my private office, although she had been waiting much longer than he had; and the graceful manner in which this permission was given evidently made an impression upon him, for on entering my room he immediately inquired who the beautiful young lady was that had granted him the precedence.

Not long after this the Countess of Téba and her mother, the Countess of Montijo, were among those who regularly received invitations to the Elysée Palace, where the Prince-President then resided; and there the young Countess was greatly admired and attracted the attention of everybody.

Digitized by Google

MADEMOISELLE EUGÉNIE—COMTESSE DE TÉBA.
From a photograph taken in 1852.

To face p. 90.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

She possessed a singularly striking face, oval in contour, and remarkable for the purity of its lines; a brilliant, light, clear complexion; blue eyes, peculiarly soft and liquid, shielded by long lashes and, when in repose, cast slightly downward; hair of a most beautiful golden chestnut colour, a rather thin nose exquisitely moulded, and a small, delicate mouth that disclosed when she smiled teeth that were like pearls. Her figure was above the average height and almost perfect in its proportions—the waist round, and the neck and shoulders admirably formed—and, withal, she possessed great vivacity of expression and elegance in her movements, together with an indescribable charm of manner. Indeed, she was a woman of a very rare type physically as well as morally; one whose distinguishing qualities always seemed to me to reveal the existence of Irish rather than Scotch blood, notwithstanding the name of her mother's family—Kirkpatrick. But she was richly endowed, by inheritance or otherwise, with the best qualities of more than one race; and, if it was true that her beauty was blond and delicate from her Scotch ancestry, it was no less true that "her grace was all Spanish, and her wit all French."

The Prince himself soon recognised the extraordinary personal and mental endowments, and the various excellent and characteristic traits of the Countess. It, therefore, is not to be wondered at that, when he came to the conclusion that marrying princesses was not his affair, he should have remembered the lady whom he had so often admired, or that he renewed the acquaintance purposely and more

Digitized by Google

intimately in the autumn of 1852; and that it led, with the rapidity of romance, to an engagement of marriage which he, having in the meanwhile become Emperor, formally announced, January 22, 1853, in the throne room of the Tuileries, to the Senate, the Legislative Assembly, and the highest officials of his Government.

The words which the Emperor used on this occasion, present in their true light the motives that led him to this union, and are a beautiful appreciation of the worthiness of his betrothed, who afterward proved so faithful to him as a wife, not only in the days of splendour when Fortune smiled upon the Imperial throne, but also in the hours of misfortune and exile that followed.

"She whom I have chosen by preference," said the Emperor, "is of high birth. French at heart by her education, and by the remembrance of the blood which her father shed for the cause of the Empire, she has, as a Spaniard, the advantage of having no relatives in France to whom she would be obliged to grant honours and dignities. Endowed with every good quality of the mind, she will be an ornament to the throne, and in the hour of danger she will become one of its most courageous supporters. Catholic and pious, she will send to Heaven the same prayers as I for the welfare of France; gracious and good, she will, as I firmly hope, revive the virtues of the Empress Josephine, whose place she is about to take.

"I come here, then, gentlemen, to say to France: 'I have preferred to have for a wife a woman whom I love and respect, rather than a woman unknown to me

Digitized by Google

and with whom the advantages of an alliance would have been mingled with sacrifices. Without showing disdain towards any one, I yield to my own inclinations, but after having consulted my reason and my convictions. In short, having placed independence, the qualities of the heart, and domestic happiness above dynastic prejudices and the designs of ambition, I shall not be less strong, since I shall be more free.'"

As might have been expected, the announcement of this marriage came as a surprise to the French people. Nor was it at first received with entire satisfaction by those who, having rallied to the support of the new Government, had hoped to see it strengthened by an alliance with the reigning families of Europe. This feeling of disappointment found expression in various ways that sometimes were not wanting in piquancy.

One of the persons who had most urgently opposed the Emperor's marriage with Mademoiselle de Montijo was M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. On finding that his counsel had been entirely disregarded, he concluded to send in his resignation to the Emperor, but, before doing so, he called upon Mademoiselle de Montijo to pay her his respects officially. He had scarcely spoken when she said:

"You will permit me to thank you, and very sincerely, for the advice you have given to the Emperor with respect to his marriage. Your advice to him was exactly the same as mine."

"The Emperor has betrayed me—I see," said the Minister.

"No: the honourable recognition of your sincerity —the making me acquainted with the opinion of a

Digitized by Google

devoted servant who has given utterance to my own sentiments—this is no betrayal. I told the Emperor, as you did, that the interests of his throne should be taken into consideration; but it is not for me to be his judge, whether he is right or wrong in believing that his interests can be reconciled with his sentiments."

It is hardly necessary to add that M. Drouyn de Lhuys promptly reversed his opinion concerning Mademoiselle de Montijo, and retained his portfolio.

A story also is told of a distinguished Senator, who, having been asked what he thought of the Emperor's declaration of his matrimonial intentions addressed to the representatives of the Government and the people, replied:

"A fine speech—excellent; but I prefer the sauce to the fish."

It seems this remark was reported at the palace, greatly to the amusement of the parties principally concerned. Now it so happened that, at a dinner given at the Tuileries a few weeks later, this Senator was seated next to the Empress, who, observing that after having been helped to the turbot, he declined the sauce, said to him, smiling roguishly:

"Monsieur, I thought it was the sauce you liked, and not the fish."

With rare presence of mind the gentleman replied after a moment of hesitancy: "A mistake, Madame, for which I am now trying to make amends."

And so nearly all those persons who at first were inclined to manifest their disappointment or surprise, discovered they had made a mistake, the moment they enjoyed the privilege of meeting her Majesty, and

Digitized by Google

were themselves fascinated by her beauty and wit, or felt the influence of the subtle charm that seemed to come from the very soul of the woman, and, like an ever-present atmosphere, invest her sweet and sympathetic personality. They were now ready to confess that the Emperor was right when he said to the great dignitaries of the Empire: "You, gentlemen, when you come to know her, will be convinced that I have been inspired by Providence."

The marriage of the Emperor had the sanction of public opinion, and there was a touch of romance about it that made it pleasing to the people. While Lamartine, the shifty Republican, could hardly look with favour on the Imperial pair, Lamartine, the poet, gracefully acknowledged that the Emperor had by this marriage made real the most beautiful dream a man can have—that he had raised up the woman he loved, and had set her above all other women.

On the 30th of January, 1853, I saw the marriage between Napoleon III. and Mademoiselle Eugénie de Montijo celebrated in the old cathedral of Notre Dame with all the splendour and magnificence to which the monarch of a great nation and the consort of his choice were entitled. The ceremonial observed on this occasion was quite like that employed at the marriage of Napoleon and Josephine, but was even more elaborate and spectacular in its details. The gilded State carriage surmounted by the Imperial eagle and drawn by eight horses, in which the Emperor, in the uniform of a general of division, was seated by the side of his bride, was the one used by Napoleon and Josephine on the day of their coronation. The

Digitized by Google

approaches to the Tuileries, the courts of the Louvre, and the streets leading to the cathedral were filled with an immense crowd of people whose enthusiasm was unbounded. It would be impossible to describe the profound impression produced when, after the passing of the main body of the cortège, the Imperial carriage was seen advancing, surrounded by the great officers of the army, and preceded and followed by squadrons of cavalry, and we heard the hum of voices —the half-suppressed exclamations of admiration— then a silence, followed by long-continued *vivas*—"*vive l'Empereur*"—"*vive Eugénie*"—"*vive la France.*"

Those who were fortunate enough, as I was, to catch, through the windows of the coach of glass and gold, a glimpse of the divinely beautiful bride who sat beside the Emperor like a captive fairy queen, her hair trimmed with orange blossoms, a diadem on her head, her corsage brilliant with gems, wearing a necklace of pearls, and enveloped in a cloud of lace—can never forget this radiant and yet shrinking figure. Radiant, she seemed to feel that Fortune had conferred upon her its supremest gift, and that she was about to realise the prediction once whispered in her ear by a Spanish gipsy woman, "the day will come when *you* shall be a Queen"; and yet shrinking, as if she feared that behind all this show of enthusiasm and splendour there was another world—a world of violence and of sorrow; that the things which were seen were an illusion and vanity, and that the things which were not seen were the eternal reality. Perhaps she was thinking of the young Austrian Princess whose marriage was also celebrated with the greatest pomp; and of the

Digitized by Google

day that followed—the 16th of October, 1793—when the shouting of the people was heard by her for the last time; for Eugénie de Montijo even then had learned by heart this touching story of royal happiness and despair.

In the cathedral, where the marriage ceremony took place, the columns and lofty vaults had been decorated with rich draperies, and banners, and banderoles; and palms, and garlands of white blossoms, and banks of flowers had been scattered everywhere—innumerable candles lighting up the whole of the vast interior, filled to its utmost capacity by the great bodies of the State, the diplomatic corps and the representatives of the Army, the Church and the cities of France, and by the elegance and beauty of the world of fashion. The scene was one of unparalleled magnificence. Nothing was wanting to invest the occasion with splendour and solemnity. On entering this ancient church and going forward to the altar, while a wedding march was played by an orchestra of five hundred musicians, the bride was quite overcome by her emotions. But when the archbishop said to her: "Madame—you declare, recognise, and swear before God, and before the Holy Church, that you take now for your husband and legal spouse the Emperor Napoleon III., here present," she responded, in a clear, sweet voice, "*Oui Monsieur.*"

If the elegance of her person evoked admiration on every side, the modest dignity with which she performed her part in this great and imposing ceremony secured to her the sympathy and good-will of all who witnessed it.

After the ceremony was over the procession returned

Digitized by Google

to the Tuileries in the same order in which it had left the palace, and the Emperor and the Empress, ascending the steps of the "Salle des Maréchaux," came forward on the balcony, and saluted the assembled multitude, who returned with loud and repeated *vivas* this gracious recognition on the part of their sovereigns.

Napoleon, on the morning of his marriage, going into the dressing-room of Marie Louise, said as he placed with his own hands a crown upon her head: "The Empress will wear this crown. It is not beautiful, but it is unique, and I wish to attach it to my dynasty." On the 30th of January, 1853, Eugénie de Montijo entered the Tuileries—the Palace of Catherine de Medici, of Marguerite de Navarre, of Marie Antoinette, of Josephine, of Marie Louise—in triumph, wearing upon her head the same Imperial crown. And she was worthy of this honour; for from that day the Empress Eugénie ranked without question among the most admired and beloved sovereigns of the nineteenth century; and, as if she were destined to have over her predecessors a certain melancholy pre-eminence, her name is the last of the names of women, the wonderful story of whose lives has made the Palace of the Tuileries for ever memorable in French history.

A few days after Eugénie de Montijo—or, as I had always been accustomed to call her, the Countess of Téba—had been installed as Empress at the Tuileries, she sent word to me by Mademoiselle Pepa, her confidential maid—who afterward, by marriage with a subaltern officer, became Madame Pollet—that,

Digitized by Google

having need of my professional services, she wished me to come and see her at the Tuileries.

Pepa informed me that her Majesty desired to see me personally. The Empress, as the Countess of Téba, had always been accustomed to come to my office and to take her turn with the others, and it was an innovation to ask me to go to her; so she was careful, in making this request, to have it appear that she considered she was asking a favour, or at least was paying me a special compliment.

On entering her room she received me most cordially and unaffectedly. We conversed about the great change in her position, and how it had come to pass; and she told me many things that had taken place during the interval since I had seen her.

I remember, when Pepa came into the room to speak with the Empress, how they both laughed as the poor, simple woman who had known the lady from childhood and had naturally been most familiar with her as a young girl, tried to say, "your Majesty." She could not get it out. She spoke French with a strong Spanish accent, and kept laughing as she tried to call her by her new title. It was most amusing, and the Empress saw it in a humorous light and enjoyed it greatly. But with time Pepa and all of us fell into the way of giving to the Empress her title "your Majesty."

As my illustrious and most interesting patient, although at the moment quite comfortable, had been suffering greatly and feared a repetition of the same trouble, and as she had important duties to attend to, and a reception in the evening, I remained at the

Digitized by Google

Tuileries several hours in order to be sure that she should, if possible, be able to appear at the function, for which elaborate preparations had been made. We had, therefore, much time for conversation.

While speaking of the Tuileries, the part which we were in being one that I had never before visited, the Empress called my attention to certain articles of furniture and precious objects, some of which had belonged to Marie Antoinette. She spoke of the Queen's sad fate, and of the souvenirs connected with the room we were sitting in, and about the historical associations of the old palace. Much of this conversation was to me particularly interesting. There was in it a vein of sadness or melancholy mingled with scarcely concealed surprise at her own position as sovereign mistress where so many great ladies had lived—to-day the favourites of fortune, to-morrow the unhappy victims of popular fury, some sent into exile and some to the scaffold. There was, however, no indication whatsoever in her deportment of any feeling of vanity or of pride at being elevated to the throne and becoming the first lady in the land. In all this there was a charm, a simplicity of soul which I saw again in troublous times, in the terrible days of 1870, when hastening with her from that France where, for upwards of seventeen years, her goodness, and her beauty and distinction, had held the world at her feet.

A little incident took place on this day which revealed to me the strong and romantic attachment of the Emperor to his lovely wife. It was the first day since her marriage on which she had suffered acute pain, and the Emperor expressed the greatest

Digitized by Google

sympathy for her, and was most attentive—coming upstairs from his cabinet several times to inquire how she was feeling. Just before I left the palace, very happy to know that my charming patient was no longer suffering, the Emperor entered the room again, with a box in his hand, and, approaching the Empress, took from it a magnificent string of pearls, which he placed around her neck.

Some time before M. Charles Thélin had told me that the Emperor possessed a remarkable collection of pearls, which he had selected one by one, intending to make with them a necklace for the Empress. Touched by a feeling of love and compassion, his Majesty had been unable to keep his secret from her any longer.

Eugénie de Montijo was not so dazzled by the splendour of her new position as to forget the companions of her earlier and more simple life. She invited them to come to see her. Some of them became her *dames du Palais*. She wished all of them to speak to her familiarly, as they used to do. Her friendly advances towards them were not to relieve *ennui* or to fill up a void created in her life by the formalities of the palace. She now had the power to help them and to honour them—and this she loved to do. I may remark here that this kind consideration—this fondness for her friends—was a sentiment that had its origin in an affection which once having been felt was sincere and constant, and endured through good report and evil report to the end.

I have never known a woman that had such reason

Digitized by Google

to distrust the sincerity of some of the persons in her immediate *entourage*, who was so full of faith in the good intentions and so abounding in charity towards the shortcomings of all who claimed to be her friends. If she could not say something in praise of them, she preferred to remain silent, unless their conduct was made a subject of criticism by others, when she was pretty sure to come to their defence, and sometimes with a warmth of feeling that was surprising.

Perhaps the explanation of this trait of character is to be found in her inability to forget a kindness.

When reproached one day for keeping up her intercourse with certain ladies—the Delessarts—who were well-known for their Orleanist sympathies, her reply was: "They were very kind to me before my marriage, and I never forget my old friends." Indeed, I do not believe there is a single person now living that has ever rendered her Majesty a notable service who has not heard her say—and *more than once*—"I never can forget what you have done for me."

The attachment of the Empress to her old friends and the associates of her earlier days is strikingly illustrated by her relations with, and the consideration which she always had for, her principal lady's maid, Madame Pollet. "Pepa," as she was familiarly called, was the daughter of a Carlist general; but when very young she entered into the personal service of the Countess of Téba. Her devotion to her mistress was unbounded, and she soon obtained, as she deserved, her esteem and confidence in equal measure. With her Majesty, Pepa went to the Tuileries, where she was entrusted with the general

Digitized by Google

direction over a multitude of things connected with the domesticity of the palace, and became, in a way, a personage—at least to a certain circle. She was a little woman, not in good health, fretful, irritable, and timid. Her person, her manner, her accent, her devotion to her mistress, the fact that she was the direct intermediary between her Majesty and the tradesmen, and the very confidence reposed in her, in all her doings and dealings, exposed her constantly to ridicule and reproach. It is, therefore, not surprising that great injustice should have been done this faithful attendant and confidant of her Majesty by the *personnel* of the palace and the chroniclers of the doings of the Imperial Court. But the Empress knew her sterling qualities, her sincerity, and her integrity, and appreciated her accordingly. In fact, she never failed to defend with warmth her "poor Pepa" against every attack, from whatever quarter it might come.

"Yes," said the Empress to me one day, "Pepa is timid; she starts at the rustling of a curtain, and turns pale at the moaning of the wind, and screams at the sight of a mouse, and is in a constant state of terror lest we should all be assassinated; but let her see or think that I am in any real danger—ah! then she is no longer afraid, but has the courage of a little lioness." Pepa is long since dead; but she never in life was more devoted to her mistress than the Empress is still devoted to the memory of her very humble, but most sincere, friend and servant.

Notwithstanding the great change in her rank, the Empress remained unchanged in her character; and unchanged also was the unaffected courtesy with

Digitized by Google

which she received all who came into her presence. Nor did her kindness and love for everything that was true and noble grow less. I have seen her frequently during many years; I have seen her surrounded by luxury and the pageantries of the most brilliant Court in Europe; I have witnessed her greatest triumphs, but I cannot recall one moment in which her demeanour towards others, no matter how humble their station in life, was different from that by which she attracted the sympathy of all those who knew her as a young lady. She always had the excellent good sense never to impose herself as Empress upon the persons whom she had known before her elevation to the throne; and yet she never forgot that she was no longer of that world to which she had once belonged. In a word, she possessed an instinctive appreciation of the requirements of her position, and so happily harmonised and combined her natural impulse to be herself with a sense of the reserve and dignity becoming her exalted rank, that she won the praises of all. Queen Christine pronounced her deportment admirable, and declared that she carried herself "neither too high nor too low." And the Queen of England was of the same opinion. At the time of the visit of their Imperial Majesties to London, in 1855, the Queen writes of the Empress in her diary as follows: "She is full of courage and spirit, and yet so gentle, with such innocence and *enjouement*, that the *ensemble* is most charming. With all her great liveliness, she has the prettiest and most modest manner." And a day or two later the Queen writes, "Her manner is the most perfect thing I have

Digitized by Google

ever seen—so gentle, and graceful, and kind; and the courtesy so charming, and so modest and retiring withal." [1]

And yet while she was so condescending and so courteous to all, and so easy of approach, who that ever saw the Empress on great ceremonial occasions will forget the dignity as well as grace with which she responded to the salutations she received, or the grand manner of her carriage? The appearance of her Majesty on some of these occasions has doubtless suggested to the mind of more than one person the words used by Saint Simon when speaking of the Duchess of Burgundy: "*Sa démarche était celle d'une déesse sur les nuées.*"

But it was the amiable and gentle manner of the Empress, the absence of every sign of superciliousness or of undue pride after her elevation to the throne, even more than her extraordinary beauty and *esprit*, that disarmed opposition, and won for her the admiration even of those who, jealous of her rare fortune, were at first most disposed to criticise her. And such criticism as she was subjected to! How insignificant in reality it always was! Never a word that cast a reflection on her goodness, her loyalty, or fidelity as a wife and mother! The foundation on which her character as Empress and woman rested was unassailable. But the anti-Imperialist gossips never grew weary of tattling about her love of personal display, of inventorying her dresses, and bonnets, and jewels, and furs, and of hypocritically bemoaning the "*luxe offréné*"—the unbridled luxury—of the Court.

[1] "Life of the Prince Consort," by Theodore Martin, vol. iii.

Digitized by Google

Just as if it was not one of the principal functions of a sovereign in a country like France—the *arbître de la mode* for the world—to set the fashions of the day, and to regulate the etiquette and ceremonials of the Court!

And most eminently was she qualified to prescribe and govern the "form" at a Court brilliant and fond of display and originality to the verge of eccentricity. It was with the most exquisite tact and taste that she fixed the line where fashion stopped, and to pass beyond which would have been ridiculous. The *beau monde* everywhere accepted her decisions in these matters as *ne plus ultra*. From the day she entered the Tuileries the Empress was the ruler of the world of fashion and the supreme authority with her sex, in the four quarters of the globe, in all matters pertaining to the graces and elegancies of social life; and through her patronage the names of the *couturières*, and *modistes*, and florists of Paris became famous in every land.

And yet most ladies who are at all prominent in our *fin de siècle* society would probably be greatly surprised were I to tell them that the Empress, when one day at Farnborough reference was made to these particular critics and the alleged extravagance of her wardrobe, said in my presence: "How very ridiculous all this is. Well, I suppose they think they must say something. Why! with the exception of a few gowns made for special ceremonial occasions" (those which she used very happily to call "*mes robes politiques*") "during the whole time I was at the Tuileries I never wore a dress that cost more than *fifteen hundred*

Digitized by Google

francs, and most of my dresses were much less expensive."

A writer, who is no friend of the Empress, has the grace to say, when speaking of her: "We live at a time when queens are exposed to public observation more than ever before, when they cannot put on a dress without having it described by fifty newspapers, when twenty articles are published every day about their fêtes, their amusements, their jewels, and their head-dresses. This publicity tends to lower queens in the estimation of the people, who no longer see anything but the frivolous side of their lives.

"To support without concern, as also without haughtiness, the gaze of so many people who are constantly examining you; to take, without having the appearance of it, one's part of the responsibility of governing, and the most dangerous, perhaps; to appear at the same time serious and frivolous, a woman of the world and of the home, and religious without being a devotee; to dress without affectation; to discuss literature without pedantry, and politics without embarrassment; to read what a well-instructed woman should read; to say what a clever woman is expected to say; to know how to speak to women and to men, to the young and to the old; to be, in a word, always on the stage—this is the rôle of a queen."

And certainly very few persons will be disposed to deny the truth and justice of this writer's conclusion that "Queen or Empress is a difficult trade in a country like France, and in a time like that in which we live!"[1]

[1] Taxil Delord, "Histoire du Second Empire," tome i. p. 518.

Digitized by Google

Soon after the fall of the Empire, stories were put in circulation to the effect that the Imperial family had accumulated a large fortune, which they had been very careful to remove from France. It was alleged that, always uncertain as to the stability of a Government of adventure, they had with great discretion been "making hay while the sun shone," and had invested considerable sums in English consols, and, wonderful to relate, in New York real estate. The honour even was attributed to me of having advised the American investments, and also of having acted as the agent in these transactions. Not only were all these stories untrue, but, for those making me a party to the financial affairs of the Imperial family, there was never the slightest foundation.[1]

[1] Among the papers and correspondence of the Imperial family, found at the Tuileries, and published in 1870 by the Government of the National Defence, is a scrap containing a miscellaneous list of property amounting to nearly a million pounds sterling. It is without a heading, or any indication of its origin or character. It is called, however, "a very precious document," and is assumed to be an inventory of the personal property of the Emperor, deposited at the Barings in 1866. It is still used to give credit to the stories referred to above. Among the items in the list is this one, namely, "Uniforms, £16,000." Why Napoleon III. should have had, in 1866, sixteen thousand pounds worth of uniforms stowed away in the bank of the Barings, in London, seems to have greatly puzzled the editors of the papers and correspondence referred to. Their conjectures are highly amusing. "*Les fragments incomplets ramassés dans de vieux papiers*," which formed a very large part of this correspondence, have been officially discredited. (See "Enquête Parlementaire," 1872, p. 14.) In fact, as it was soon discovered that the Government could derive no political benefit from the publication of these papers, only one volume was published officially; and the papers, after having passed through the hands of the Republican authorities—excepting a few that went astray—were returned to the heirs of Napoleon III. See Appendix III.

Digitized by Google

The Emperor's generosity, his prodigality even was notorious. The direct appeals to him for pecuniary assistance were constant, and he gave away immense sums to charities of every kind. The Empress was the Lady Bountiful of the reign; but the Emperor delighted to aid her in her benevolent work and to make her the agent and dispenser of his own liberalities. The demands upon the privy purse were endless. Often it was drawn upon to supplement the lack of public funds. The account of the Imperial civil list, which has been published, shows that during his reign the Emperor distributed personally over *ninety millions* of francs in public and private benefactions. The last large sum of money he had in his possession, 1,000,000 francs, he ordered to be distributed among the troops that capitulated at Sedan, reserving absolutely nothing for his personal use. During his reign he made no monetary provision for the future. When he left France, in September, 1870, his personal fortune was no greater than it was when he came to France twenty-two years before. He owned the château at Arenenberg, which brought him no income, and a little property in Italy, from which he derived a small revenue—all of which he had inherited. Had it not been for the private fortune of the Empress, the family would have then been at once reduced to very straitened circumstances.

The Empress was the owner of some property in Spain, the Villa Eugenia at Biarritz, besides other real estate in France; some of which she subsequently generously gave to the French people. But a large part of the Empress' fortune consisted of jewels, most

Digitized by Google

of which had been presented to her at the time of her marriage, and some of which were of very great value —among them a magnificent collection of pearls, and several large diamonds of extraordinary purity and brilliancy that originally belonged to Marie Antoinette and formed a part of the famous "diamond necklace," the tragic story of which has been so powerfully told by Carlyle. These jewels were sold after their Majesties were settled in England, as was also the property at Biarritz, and the proceeds were invested in income-yielding securities. But, altogether, the fortune of the Imperial family was not large, particularly in view of the claims of needy dependents and obligations of various kinds, which could neither be repudiated nor ignored.

I may remark that very few of the persons prominently connected with the Second Empire appear to have accumulated wealth; and that having lost their official positions after the fall of the Imperial Government, great numbers of those who were advanced in life were reduced to extreme indigence. When the attention of a French Republican is called to this fact—that money-making was not the business of the servants of the Empire—he shrugs his shoulders and cynically says: "I suppose they thought it was going to last for ever."

It is not difficult to understand how impossible it was to satisfy all those servitors who felt that they had a right to appeal to their late sovereigns for pecuniary assistance; or to prevent in some cases the disagreeable consequences of a failure to respond to such appeals.

Digitized by Google

But there was another class of solicitors far more difficult to deal with, men and women who were anxious to espouse the Imperialist cause—for money. It was impossible to listen to these people, and their assistance was politely declined. But they went away carrying with them a bitter feeling of disappointment that subsequently found expression in petulant and vicious attacks, directed more particularly against the Empress, whose good sense in refusing to be exploited was attributed to parsimony and niggardliness. There were times when these personal attacks were absolutely heartless; when even the mourning of a mother was made the pretext for the most cruel insinuations. These savage thrusts were keenly felt, but the wisdom and real greatness of character which the Empress possesses were never more conspicuously shown than in her ability to listen to these slanders in silence—and if in sorrow, in pity also.

Although misfortune finally dethroned the Empress Eugénie it was certainly not because she had proved unworthy of her high position. She, as well as her magnanimous husband, had to suffer on account of being too trustful and generous to others. They lost their Empire because they loved their people, believed them, and confided in them. History may judge the monarch and his companion in the Imperial dignity by the political events of their reign. It is the privilege, it is the duty, of the friend to judge the man and the woman, to judge their hearts. But if historical writings were free from errors of fact and were a philosophical record of the actions of men, stating correctly their motives and their material and

Digitized by Google

moral limitations, and giving credit to whom credit was due, many of those persons who are condemned by public opinion would be admired and honoured.

Indeed, few women who have sat upon a throne have a larger claim to the love and esteem of their people, or have shown to the world a higher and more charming personal character than the noble consort of Napoleon III. The conduct of her whole life bears witness to this.

The first act of the Countess of Téba after her engagement to the Emperor, like so many of her acts, was one of charity. The Municipal Council of Paris, desirous to show its devotion to the Emperor's bride, had voted a sum of 600,000 francs for the purpose of purchasing for her a set of diamonds.

When the Countess heard of this she addressed to the Prefect of the Seine the following letter:

"MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET,—I have been moved greatly by hearing of the generous decision which the Municipal Council of Paris has taken, and by which it manifests its sympathetic approval of the union which the Emperor is about to contract. Nevertheless, it would pain me to think that the first public document to which my name is attached at the moment of my marriage should record a considerable expense for the city of Paris.

"You will, therefore, please permit me to decline your gift, however flattering it is to me. You will make me happier by using for charitable purposes the sum that you have appropriated for the purchasing of the diamond set which the Municipal Council intended to present to me.

Digitized by Google

"I do not wish that my marriage should impose any new burden on the country to which I belong from this moment; and the only ambition I have is to share with the Emperor the love and esteem of the French people.

"I beg you, M. le Préfet, to express to your Council my very sincere thanks, and to accept the assurance of my great esteem.

"EUGÉNIE COMTESSE DE TÉBA.

"Palais de l'Élysée, January 26, 1853."

In conformity with this wish of the bride of the Emperor the sum voted by the City Council was used for the erection of an establishment in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, where young girls receive a professional education. This establishment was opened in the year 1857, and placed under the protection of her Majesty; in it were accommodations for three hundred pupils.

But not satisfied with declining the gift of the Paris Municipal Council and suggesting its use for charitable purposes, the Countess of Téba set the example she wished others to follow, by taking the 250,000 francs the Emperor had placed among her wedding presents, and sending them to be distributed among the poor.

In order to be always informed of cases where help and assistance to the sick were especially needed, the Empress, during the whole period of her reign, was surrounded by a staff of persons whose business it was to inquire into the condition of the poor and suffering, and to report the result of their investigations to her personally.

Digitized by Google

Her Majesty not only generously disposed of her fortune in charitable work and gave assistance in special cases on the representation of others, but she went herself to visit the needy, even in the most remote quarters of her capital.

Frequently, and especially in winter, when the indigent suffer the most, the Empress left her palace *incognito*, accompanied by one faithful attendant only, to visit the dwellings where she had been informed there was destitution and distress. On many occasions she ascended to the attics where the poor persons lived, not minding the fatigue, and sat down by the beds, without fearing contagion, to encourage the sick by her presence and with kind words.

The courage and self-sacrifice she at times exhibited, when engaged in benevolent and charitable work, were conspicuously shown during her memorable visits to the cholera hospitals in Paris and at Amiens.

On October 23, 1865, cholera was epidemic in the city of Paris, and the deaths had within a few days increased so rapidly, that a state of panic reigned among the inhabitants. Most of those who were able to do so had left, or were preparing to leave, the city, but the Empress Eugénie took this opportunity to give to her subjects an example of courage. It is well known that fear is a very effective agent in the propagation of disease. The Empress, wishing to show that there was no good reason to fear, visited successively the cholera patients at the Beaujon, Lariboisière, and Saint Antoine hospitals.

I may mention a little incident that occurred at this time. When visiting the Hospital of Saint Antoine,

Digitized by Google

the Empress addressed a question to a patient; the man, whose sight had become weak, on account of his being in a state of collapse and at the point of death, answered, "Yes, my sister."

"My friend," said the Lady Superior of the hospital, "it is not I who speak to you, but the Empress."

"Do not correct him, my good Mother," said her Majesty; "it is the most beautiful name he could have given to me."

And when, on returning to the palace, one of her ladies-in-waiting, having learned where she had been, said: "I am sorry you did not ask me to go with you —if I am permitted to participate in your pleasures, I think it is only right that I should share your dangers," the Empress replied: "No, my dear; it was my duty as Empress to take this risk; but I should do very wrongly were I to request you, who are a mother and have other duties, to imperil your life unnecessarily."

In the following year the cholera raged fearfully among the unfortunate inhabitants of Amiens, where the alarm was greater, if possible, than it had been in Paris. On the 4th of July, upon the receipt of the news of the enormous number of deaths that had occurred there, the Empress left her capital, accompanied by the Countess de Lourmet and the Marquis de Piennes, and hastened to Amiens, where, immediately upon arriving, she drove to the Hôtel Dieu. She visited all the wards of this hospital without exception, stopping at the bed of every patient. Taking their hands, she spoke to them kindly, and perhaps saved the lives of many by thus reviving their hopes. As she was about to depart, two little children who

Digitized by Google

had been made orphans by the epidemic were pointed out to her by M. Cornuau. When the Empress beheld them, she instantly said: "I adopt them. They shall be provided for." Many of the bystanders, at these words of her Majesty, were moved to tears.

From the Hôtel Dieu, the Empress drove to the City Hall, where she remained for a short time, and afterward visited the hospitals in the Rue de Noyon, kept by the *Petites-Sœurs-des-Pauvres*, the charitable institutions in the Quartier Saint-Leu, and in the Rue Gresset, and many other hospitals besides. And then she went to the great Cathedral—the noble and solemn magnificence of which so impressed Napoleon, that he exclaimed: "An atheist would not feel at home here!"—to pray to God to deliver the good city of Amiens from the power of the scourge.

In order to perpetuate the remembrance of this visit to Amiens, a painting representing the Empress at the bed of a cholera patient was placed in one of the halls of the museum of that city. The Municipal Council of Amiens has, however, lately ordered this painting to be taken away. But the visit of her Majesty, who came as an angel of pity in the hour of suffering, will long be remembered by the inhabitants of the ancient capital of Picardy.

Always faithful to her Church, and sedulously observant of her religious obligations and duties, the Empress is absolutely free from any suspicion of sacerdotalism.

As the Emperor himself said of her: "She is pious but not bigoted." How could she ever have been

Digitized by Google

bigoted, with Henri Beyle as the mentor of her youth, and Mérimée the friend of her later years; both accomplished *littérateurs* and men of the world, but materialists both, and each capable—if men ever were—of eating a priest for breakfast? Indeed, the society in which she passed her whole life from her earliest childhood, if not precisely latitudinarian, was one of great intellectual breadth, in which questions of every sort were discussed on every side and with the utmost freedom.

When M. Duruy proposed to open the University for "the higher education" of girls he brought down upon himself the wrath of the ultra-Catholic party, led by Dupanloup, the fiery Bishop of Orleans, and encouraged by Pius IX. himself, who praised the Bishop for having "denounced those men who, charged with the administration of public affairs, were favouring the designs of impiety by new and unheard-of attempts, and imprudently putting the last hand to the ruin of social order." That such opinions were not her opinions, the Empress did not hesitate to openly declare, and she emphasised her position with respect to these "designs of impiety" by sending her nieces to attend the lectures at the Sorbonne.

Whatever in her own mind she might hold to be the ultimate truth, she had learned and believed that religion was largely a personal matter and an inheritance, and, consequently, has always regarded with tolerance, and with sympathy even, the members of every confession and the worshippers at altars other than her own. And this tolerance is genuine and true. It is no product of policy or indifference. It is

Digitized by Google

the result of knowledge. For the Empress has discovered, as many of us have, that respect for the temples of others in no way weakens, but rather strengthens, the veneration in which we hold our own holy places.

I shall never forget her unconcealed indignation on a certain occasion—since she has been living in England—when some one remarked: "It was the man's religion, I suppose, that condemned him." "No!" said she, starting up suddenly; "a religion should condemn no one. I don't believe it. It would be a disgrace to our Christian civilisation—to any civilisation." And turning towards me, she continued: "You are a Protestant, I am a Catholic, another is a Jew. Is the difference in our religious opinions, in our forms of worship of one and the same great God, a reason why we should not be equal before the law? Is it on the pretext of these differences that we are to be refused justice in our courts? The idea is monstrous! There is but one justice before God; and it belongs to all men alike, rich or poor, black or white, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile." And these opinions—this large and tolerant spirit—owed nothing to her altered situation in life and a new environment.

Some time in the early sixties, the Grand Rabbi of France received a note asking him to come to the Tuileries on the following morning. His astonishment was great. What had he done that should have provoked this sudden summons? With fear and trepidation he went to the palace, and was ushered into the apartment of a chamberlain. Here he was

Digitized by Google

told that the Empress wished to see him. On being introduced into her cabinet the Empress, to his surprise, received him very graciously; but he was, if possible, still more astonished when he learned her Majesty's object in requesting him to come to the palace: she wished to obtain his advice and co-operation in a charity in which she was greatly interested—one intended for the special benefit of the Jews.

Nor did the Empress restrict her liberalities and activities to work that was merely eleemosynary and philanthropic. She was keenly interested in everything that might extend the moral power, the civilising influence, the language, and the fame of the French nation. She was ever ready to encourage literature, art, and science by appreciative words and helpful gifts.

Those famous "house parties" at Compiègne were not assemblies, as so often represented, of men and women preoccupied with fashion and the frivolities of life, but of persons distinguished in the liberal professions and arts, or for their special accomplishments or personal achievements. An invitation to pass a week in her society was among the gracious ways the Empress took to encourage those who were striving to widen and enrich the field of knowledge and cultivate a love of the true and the beautiful in the service of man, and to express her recognition of the merits of a Leverrier or a Pasteur, of an Ernest Legouvé, a Gérôme, or a Gounod. And was it not Flandrin who wrote to his friend Laurens to tell him how the Empress never ceased in her attentions to him while

Digitized by Google

he was a guest at Compiègne? That this generous hospitality was appreciated, at the time, by those who were privileged to enjoy it, we may feel quite sure when a man of the eminence and sobriety of speech of M. Victor Cousin—who always stood aloof from the Empire—could write to her and say: "The esteem of such a person as you ought to satisfy the most ambitious."

But for the things of the mind themselves she had a genuine love. Nothing delighted her more than to be able to steal away with some book that had captured her fancy, and, all alone by herself, devour its contents. She was also fond of drawing, and of painting in water-colours; and she made many original designs and sketches, intended to show landscape effects, for the use of the engineers who were engaged in laying out the Bois de Boulogne. She was even a competitor for the prize offered for the best design for the new Opera House; and if she failed to obtain it, she at least had the satisfaction of hearing that her work was judged to be of sufficient excellence to entitle it to an "honourable mention."

Much of the decorative painting in the Empress' apartments at the Tuileries was designed and executed under her immediate direction. Taking Cabanel one day into her *cabinet de travail*—"There," said she, "is a panel—you see there is nothing on it but a cord. Make me a picture for it. If you don't," she continued, looking at the artist with the utmost gravity, "the cord can be used to hang—you." And so it was that to escape being hung himself, Cabanel painted his famous picture of "Ruth"—and then his

Digitized by Google

fine portrait of Napoleon III., that was placed in the same room.

The Empress was a sincere lover of Art, of healthy Art, of architecture, of pictures of nature as seen out-of-doors under the sky, of the mysterious and ever-changing sea, and of the land in its infinite variety of shape, of texture, and of colour—of mountains, and valleys, and streams, and fields, and trees, and cattle. Indeed, for homely, rural pictures she has always had a strong predilection. One, therefore, will not be surprised to hear that she was an early admirer of the works of Rosa Bonheur, or that she publicly recognised the merits of that highly gifted woman by attaching with her own hands the Cross of the Legion of Honour to the lapel of Rosa's jacket. But gifted as she was with fine artistic sense, she appreciated genius wherever she saw it. How much M. Violet le Duc, the famous archæological architect, owed to her may never be known. Not always, however, was her generous patronage forgotten. The deposed sovereign still possesses many souvenirs of grateful remembrance from artists whom she encouraged and aided when she had the power to do so. But the one cherished above all others, and never out of her Majesty's sight when she is at Farnborough, is Carpeaux' statue of the Prince Imperial standing by the side of his dog Nero—a work of beauty—a figure full of grace, the lines in the face of which are as pure and charming as those in the bust of the young Augustus.

With the extraordinary curiosity to know that characterised the Empress, it is not surprising that

Digitized by Google

she was passionately fond of travelling; that she wished to see the great world beyond the borders of France, and loved to visit strange lands, and to listen to reports and stories about distant or unexplored countries. Indeed, such was her interest in these matters, that in July, 1869, she set aside from her own private purse the sum of 200,000 francs as a perpetual fund, the interest of which—estimated at 10,000 francs—was to be awarded annually to the Frenchman who during the preceding year should have made the most important contribution to geographical knowledge.

And every one knows the deep interest she took in the construction of the Suez Canal; how warmly she espoused the cause of M. de Lesseps in 1865; how she encouraged him in the hours of his greatest difficulty; how he acknowledged her to be the "guardian angel of the canal," to have been to him "what Isabella, the Catholic, was to Christopher Columbus"; and how she went to Egypt to enjoy with him his triumph, and to rejoice during those glorious and splendid days when the waters of the Red Sea and those of the Mediterranean were formally joined together, and a new pathway was opened to the commerce of the world by French genius, energy, and perseverance. I can never forget her radiant figure as she stood on the bridge of the *Aigle*, while the Imperial yacht slowly passed by the immense throng that had assembled on the banks of the canal to greet her Majesty on her arrival at Ismalia. What a welcome she received from those children of the desert! "*Vive l'Impératrice!*" "*Vive Eugénie!*"—with cannon firing, and a thousand flags and banners

Digitized by Google

waving. But not to herself did she take these honours. It was to France that she gave them—as, finally overcome with patriotic feeling, she covered her eyes with her handkerchief to suppress her tears. And the pity of it all! Only a few years later this great work with its vast consequences slipped for ever out of the feeble hands that held it.

While recording here some of my personal impressions and souvenirs relating particularly to those moral attributes with which in my judgment her Majesty was so richly endowed, it may be interesting to note that, after the fall of the Empire, there was found at the Tuileries a manuscript in the handwriting of the Emperor, containing his own appreciation of the character of his consort. It was written in 1868, fifteen years after his marriage.

In it, among other things, he says: "The character of the Empress still remains that of a lady of the simplest and most natural tastes. . . . The lot of all classes of the unfortunate constantly awakens her special solicitude. . . . How many generous reforms she still pursues with marvellous perseverance! A little of the young *Phalansterian* is still to be found in her. The condition of women singularly preoccupies her. Her efforts are given to the elevation of her sex. . . . At Compiègne nothing is more attractive than a tea-party of the Empress (*un thé de l'Impératrice*).

"Surrounded by a select circle, she talks with equal facility upon the most abstract questions, or on the most familiar topics of the day. The freshness of her powers of perception, and the strength, the boldness

Digitized by Google

even, of her opinions at once impress and captivate. Her mode of expressing herself, occasionally incorrect is full of colour and of life. With astonishing power of exact expression in conversation on common affairs, she rises, in remarks on matters of State or morality, to a pitch of real eloquence.

"Pious without being bigoted, well informed without being pedantic, she talks on all subjects without constraint. She perhaps is too fond of discussion. Very sprightly in her nature, she often lets herself be carried away by her feelings, which have more than once excited enmities; but her exaggerations have invariably, for their foundation, the love of that which is good."

The love and admiration of the Emperor for her whom he had chosen to be his life companion only increased as the years passed. He was proud of her beauty; so much so that he was heard to say, more than once, as she appeared, dressed for some public occasion, "*Comme elle est belle!*" But he was in reality, as one may see from the language he uses in describing his consort, still prouder of her intellectual and moral qualities. He was for ever charmed by the brilliancy of her conversation, and still more so by the sincerity of her character and the purity of her ideals in all matters of conduct. The Emperor and the Empress thoroughly understood and thoroughly appreciated each other; and their mutual affection was indissolubly united in their love of an only son, a love which knew no bounds and was complete and perfect. This was the light of the life of each.

Were I to express in a few words what to me has

Digitized by Google

always seemed to be the distinguishing quality of her Majesty's character, I should say it is her perfect naturalness. She was always at home, in every sense of that word. In whatever situation she might be placed, she was as free from self-consciousness as a child. It was the spontaneity of the spoken word, the freedom of movement, its instinctive grace, and, above all, the spiritual sincerity apparent in every word and act, that gave to her personality its irresistible charm. And yet this characterisation would fail to express the whole truth, did I not say that her Majesty is not exempt from the defects of her qualities. Had she permitted herself to be less under the empire of her natural impulses, and less frequently given to the vivacious expression of her feelings and her thoughts, and been more observant of the conventionalities that were inseparable from her official station and were often imperative, she might have avoided much of the criticism to which she has been subjected and to which, I have no doubt, she for the most part unconsciously and innocently exposed herself. She has suffered, and sometimes severely, in the judgment of the world, as have other women—as does all emotional, imaginative humanity that is in the habit of speaking with little premeditation and without much reserve. To words expressing merely the passing sentiment of the moment a meaning was often imputed which they were never intended to convey. Sometimes they were supposed to represent her political convictions and sometimes her personal antipathies. They generally represented neither.

To one of his friends who thought he had occasion

Digitized by Google

to complain of a rather sharp remark addressed to him by her Majesty, the Emperor replied: "You know the Empress is very hasty—but in reality she is very fond of you!"

As for her Majesty's political convictions and sympathies, I will only say, in this connection, that they have been grossly misrepresented—for partisan purposes. The 4th of September must be justified; it is always injustice that requires instant and persistent justification. It is the old—the everlasting story: "And then they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation."

When the protagonists of the Third Republic have passed away, and the history of the Second Empire can be judged without prejudice, the true character of the Empress Eugénie—her public virtues, her goodness and her kindness, especially to the poor, will be recognised and gratefully remembered by the French people. It is the business, it is the duty, of posterity to rectify the mistakes of contemporary opinion; but happily, as Alexandre Dumas, the younger, has wittily said of this opinion, when it relates to French affairs: "*La postérité commence aux frontières de la France.*"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPERIAL COURT—THE WAR OF THE REBELLION

The Imperial Court—"Paris the heaven of Americans"—The banquet to General John A. Dix—The American colony—How things have changed—Parisian Society in those days—Causes of its decadence—Its "exoticism"—Sunt lacrimæ rerum—The War of the Rebellion—The Emperor not unfriendly to our Government—Mr. William M. Dayton—How I kept the Emperor informed with respect to the progress of the war—The Roebuck incident—The Emperor is urged to recognise the Southern Confederacy—How he came to suggest friendly mediation—He sends for me to come to Compiègne—The interview and what came of it—My visit to America—Interviews with Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward—Visit to City Point—Conversations with General Grant—His opinion of "political generals"—The Emperor's first words on my return—Why the Imperial Government did not recognise the Southern Confederacy—The Mexican Expedition—The assassination of Mr. Lincoln—The United States Sanitary Commission—The Empress' letter to me.

I HAD the honour of being among the first of the Americans that the Emperor knew intimately, although before I made his acquaintance in Paris he had visited the United States. Having arrived there in March, 1837, with the intention of remaining at least a year for the purpose of studying the institutions of the country, in less than three months he was called back to Europe suddenly

Digitized by Google

by the illness of his mother. Of the few acquaintances he made in this brief visit he retained to the end of his life very pleasant memories; for the most enduring trait in his character, and the one perhaps most strongly marked, was his lively remembrance of kindnesses shown him, particularly when he was an exile. He never forgot a person, however lowly, who had been kind to him in England, Germany, Italy, or wherever else he had lived; and he afterward, when Emperor, gave to some of these persons positions of which they were scarcely worthy. He would even go to much trouble to find out what had become of men who made no effort to recall themselves to his memory. It was most natural, therefore, that he should remember his visit to America, under the unhappy circumstances which caused him to leave Europe, and never forgot the attentions he received while in New York and in other cities of the United States, for they were bestowed when he was in the greatest need of sympathy and most susceptible of kindness.

At no court in Europe were Americans more *en evidence* than at that of the Tuileries during the entire reign of Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie. They both spoke the English language perfectly, and the Emperor had that broad way of looking at things, those liberal ideas, that love of progress, which enabled him to appreciate the greatness of our rapidly-growing country, the energy of our men, the beauty and elegance of our women, their sparkling wit and self-dependence. In fact, Americans were always well received at the Imperial Court, especially

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.
From a photograph taken about 1865.

To face p. 129.

Digitized by Google

if they were men or women of distinction, intelligence, and refinement; and the number of these, particularly of women remarkable for their social accomplishments, who were to be found in Paris during the Empire, either as residents or as occasional visitors, was very large.

Less rigid in its etiquette than most European courts, and at the same time more splendid in its ceremonial forms; the centre of political power on the Continent, and the mirror of fashion for the whole world; a stage on which were assembled the celebrities of the day, statesmen, diplomatists, generals, persons eminent in letters and in art, men distinguished in every field of human interest, and women as famous for their wit as for the elegance of their toilets and their personal charms, pre-eminent among whom was the lovely Empress herself, a vision of beauty and grace, always with a pleasant word, or a sweet smile, or a bow of recognition for every one—is it wonderful that Paris, in those days, seemed most attractive to Americans?

It used often to be said, "Paris is the heaven of Americans"; and we were even encouraged by the late Mr. Tom Appleton, of Boston, to be virtuous and pious by the assurance "that all good Americans when they die go to Paris." And should this assurance be regarded by a few incorrigible sceptics as the language of transcendent metaphor, certainly no foreign visitors to the splendid capital of France were better able than we Americans to understand how a Frenchman, how Sainte-Beuve could say,

Digitized by Google

"O Paris! c'est chez toi qu'il est doux de vivre, c'est chez toi que je veux mourir."

Never at any time were the Governments of Europe so splendidly represented at the French Court. The ambassadors, the ministers, and the attachés of the Embassies and Legations were not only diplomatists of great ability, but were men of the world; and their wives were generally equally remarkable for their intelligence and brilliant social accomplishments. Men and women like Lord and Lady Cowley, Count Hübner, the Prince and Princess de Metternich, M. de Goltz, Baron Byens, Count Andrassy, MM. de Stückelburg and Kisseleff, the Count and Countess Hatzfeld, Signor Nigra, and scores of others of equal rank and distinction, could not fail by their presence to add lustre to a court already remarkable for its elegance and urbanity.

It was my good fortune to have professional relations with the families of nearly all the diplomats who at different times, from 1852 to 1870, were accredited to the Imperial Government; and I am pleased now to remember a considerable number of those whose acquaintance I first made in this way, not so much because they were men and women conspicuous in the social life and the political history of the time, as because I have always felt that I could count them among the number of my warmest and truest friends. I think I may say this without indiscretion. At least I hope it may be accepted as evidence that I am not speaking without knowledge of the time of which I am writing.

It is well known that my countrymen, during the

Digitized by Google

last few years of the Second Empire, were in the enjoyment of such privileges at Court as to be regarded with no little envy by the members of all the foreign colonies in Paris. At the splendid receptions given in the winter, in the great salons of Apollo and the First Consul, where the whole world was brilliantly represented, few of the foreign ministers or ambassadors ventured to bring with them more than three or four of their compatriots. But our Minister was generally attended by a full squadron of his fair countrywomen, the delighted witnesses of pageants of which they themselves were one of the chief ornaments. Could it be expected that one should not sometimes hear it said: "Ah, those American Democrats! How they do love kings and princes, the pomps and ceremonies of courts!" And they did love to see them then, and still do, in these days of the triumphant Democracy —not at home, but abroad, where they leave it to their Minister or Ambassador, dressed like an undertaker, to represent the Jeffersonian simplicity of the great American Republic.

Nor can some of us ever forget the gala days and Venetian nights at Saint Cloud, at Fontainebleau, and Compiègne; nor those brilliant scenes on the ice, in the Bois de Boulogne, where all Paris assembled to enjoy the skating, gay and happy in the keen air resonant with laughter, our countrywomen winning the admiration of every one for grace of movement, and elegance of dress, and sureness of foot, leaving it to others to prvoide the *gaucheries* and the falls; nor how the Emperor and the Empress joined with the rest in the exhilarating sport, and enjoyed the

Digitized by Google

fun of it all with the zest and enthusiasm of youth.

Large as was the number of Americans almost always present at the concerts and balls given at the Tuileries, who received through the United States Legation their invitations for these as well as for other great official functions, reviews, and festivals, the Emperor—thinking that it might be particularly agreeable to Americans to witness these displays, coming as they did from a country where such spectacles were seldom, if ever, seen—often asked me to furnish the names and addresses of any of my country people who, being in Paris, I thought might like to receive invitations. And many of them would never have seen some of the most brilliant assemblies and interesting ceremonies that took place during a very remarkable period in French history—a period of unparalleled magnificence—had they not been favoured in this way.

Perhaps the most notable of these pageants—those which appealed most strongly to the popular imagination—were the entries into Paris made by the army on its return from the Crimea in 1855, and by the "Army of Italy" in 1859. They were triumphs "such as were formerly accorded by the Roman Senate to its victorious legions"; and when the Imperial eagles "which had conquered for France the rank that was her due," and the captured standards and cannon, and the tattered colours, and the bronzed and war-worn heroes passed in review on the Place Vendôme, before the Emperor on horseback, surrounded by a brilliant staff drawn up at the foot of the column made of

Digitized by Google

the guns captured at Austerlitz, the scene was most impressive.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, the 14th of August, 1859; the extraordinary display, on this occasion, of flags and banners, and decorative devices and inscriptions, in the Rue de la Paix and the principal boulevards; the triumphal arches; the immense ornamental columns surmounted by colossal Victories holding in their outstretched hands golden wreaths or crowns of laurel; the rich draperies spread from balcony to balcony across the façades of the buildings that front upon the Place Vendôme; the great tribunes to the right and the left, rising tier upon tier, and filled with thousands of people; and the gallery built over the entrance of the Ministry of Justice, where, under a magnificent canopy of crimson velvet, studded with golden bees and fringed with gold, the Empress sat, surrounded by the ladies of her Court, while all the neighbouring windows and balconies were occupied by the great dignitaries of the Empire in their showy uniforms or robes of office, and by ladies in elegant costumes—the very roofs of the houses being covered with spectators. As regiment after regiment passed along the line of march, flowers were thrown from every window and cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" arose on every side. Suddenly, as a great body of cavalry debouched from the Rue de la Paix on to the Place, a baby—the little Prince Imperial, now three years old—dressed in the blue-and-red uniform of the *Grenadiers de la Garde*, was lifted up on to the pommel of the saddle in front of the Emperor. The scene that immediately followed is indescribable. The waving of

Digitized by Google

handkerchiefs, the dipping of colours, the flashing of sabres, the storm of *vivas* that rang out from the officers, the soldiers, the tribunes, the whole vast assembly, to acclaim the little prince on his first appearance in public, appeared to be without end. This union of the future of the nation with the triumph of the army of Solférino and Magenta, at the foot of the monument that commemorated the victories of the founder of the dynasty, seemed most auspicious and touched the hearts of the people. They had been brought in contact with the forces that govern the world, and the contagion of the human feeling set in motion was so strong, so irresistible, that even the most irreconcilable enemies of the Government were carried away by it, and, joining in the demonstration, threw flowers at the feet of the Emperor and his son, and cried out with all their might: "*Vive l'Armée! Vive la France!*"

Few of those who were present on either of these occasions will ever forget the immense enthusiasm with which the spectacle revived again the glories of the "Grand Army" and the memory of Napoleon.

Say what some Frenchmen may now, there were never prouder days in the history of France than these.

In June, 1869, a banquet was given by the American colony to General John A. Dix, who was about to leave Paris, having just retired from his post as our Minister to the Imperial Court, after he had served his country faithfully, and had won the esteem, the admiration, and the love, I may say, of all who were fortunate enough to have made his acquaintance. Nearly four hundred Americans were

Digitized by Google

assembled together on this occasion, which was the most brilliant of its kind in the history of our colony. A soldier by training, General Dix was widely acquainted with the world, deliberate in his judgments, not inclined to exaggeration, and, withal, possessed a delicate and highly cultivated sense of the true and the beautiful. His reply to the toast offered in his honour was remarkable in many respects; but among the words then spoken by him, none perhaps are better worth remembering and repeating than these:

"The advantages enjoyed in Paris by the American colony, which has become so populous as almost to constitute a distinctive feature in the physiognomy of the city, can be by none better appreciated than by ourselves. We are living without personal taxation or exactions of any sort in this most magnificent of modern capitals, full of objects of interest, abounding in all that can gratify the taste, as well as in sources of solid information; and these treasures of art and of knowledge are freely opened to our inspection and use. Nor is this all. We are invited to participate most liberally—far more liberally than at any other Court in Europe—in the hospitalities of the palace. I have myself, during the two years and a half of my service here, presented to their Imperial Majesties more than three hundred of our fellow-citizens of both sexes; and a much larger number presented in former years have during the same period shared the same courtesies.

"In liberal views, and in that comprehensive forecast which shapes the policy of the present to meet

Digitized by Google

the exigencies of the future, the Emperor seems to me to be decidedly in advance of his ministers, and even of the popular body chosen by universal suffrage to aid him in his legislative labours. Of her who is the sharer of his honours and the companion of his toils, who in the hospital, at the altar, or on the throne, is alike exemplary in the discharge of her varied duties, whether incident to her position or voluntarily taken upon herself, it is difficult for me to speak without rising above the common language of eulogium. As in the history of the ruder sex great luminaries have from time to time risen high above the horizon, to break and at the same time to illustrate the monotony of the general movement, so, in the annals of hers, brilliant lights have at intervals shone forth and shed their lustre upon the stately march of regal pomp and power. Such was one of her royal predecessors; of whom Edmund Burke said, 'There never lighted on this orb, which she scarcely seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. Such was that radiant Queen of Bohemia whose memory history has embalmed, and to whom Sir Henry Wotton, in a moment of poetic exaltation, compared the beauties of the skies. And such is she of whom I am speaking. When I have seen her taking part in that most imposing, as I think, of all Imperial pageants—the opening of the Legislative Chamber, standing amid the assembled magistracy of Paris and of France, surrounded by the representatives of the talent, the genius, the learning, the literature, and the piety of this great Empire; or amid the resplendent scenes of the palace, moving

Digitized by Google

about with a gracefulness all her own, and with a simplicity of manner which has a double charm when allied to exalted rank and station, I confess I have more than once whispered to myself, and I believe not always inaudibly, that beautiful verse of the graceful and courtly Claudian, the last of the Roman poets:

'*Divino semita gressu claruit*,'

or, rendered into our plain English and stripped of its poetic hyperbole, 'The very path she treads is radiant with her unrivalled step.'"

The special favours accorded to the members of our colony by the Imperial Court were duly appreciated. They gave pleasure to us, but, in turn, by benefiting the furnishers of all the beautiful things loved and admired by Americans, they gave pleasure to the French also.

The proportion of resident members in the American colony was much greater than at present, and our colony then formed a far more considerable and influential section of Parisian society than it does to-day. And it was all the while, up to the fall of the Empire, constantly growing by the increase of its permanent elements.

During this period, the cost of living in Paris was relatively small. Rents were low, the domestic service nearly perfect, and luxuries of every sort cheap. The educational facilities were ample, not expensive, and of a high order. Paris was not only a delightful place for the rich to live in, but large numbers of Americans with moderate incomes found

Digitized by Google

that they could reside here free from a multitude of cares, in comparative elegance, members of a cultivated and refined society, and at the same time could secure for their children the advantages and accomplishments of a superior education.

New York, Philadelphia, and Boston were always well represented in our colony. But the Southern contingent was perhaps the strongest. It represented a large constituency and a class of Americans accustomed to spend money freely. If the war of 1861–65 reduced the incomes of these Southern colonists, it greatly increased their number. Moreover, up to 1861 the American Minister to France was generally a Southern man—the series ending with William C. Rives, John Y. Mason, and Charles J. Falkner, all of Virginia.

Owing to the great increase in the population and wealth of the United States, the number of Americans who visit Paris every year is larger now than it was twenty-five or thirty years ago. But few of these visitors remain here long, and those who do have generally preferred to pitch their tents among the nomads of the *Quartier Latin*, rather than live in the more conventional and fashionable *Quartier de l'Étoile*.

How things have changed with us here in Paris since 1870! Who are the Americans that are invited to the official receptions to-day? The members of our Embassy and a few persons on special missions. The relations between Americans and the representatives of the French Government are now wholly official and perfunctory. Left, since the dis-

Digitized by Google

appearance of the Imperial Court, without a recognised head and arbiter of forms and ceremonies, and procedures and precedents, Parisian society has become broken up into circles and cliques, and small bodies which move about subject to no law, and whose being and coherence would seem to be determined solely by mutual repulsion.

The tone of Parisian society in those days was quite unlike that which has since obtained. It was cosmopolitan and not provincial, and was a reflex of the political prestige of the Empire both at home and abroad. It was a society full of movement and originality, of unconventionality, and gaiety, and charm. The admirable taste, the artistic sentiment and distinction shown by those who best represented it, especially in everything relating to manners, and dress, and the outward appearance of the person, found expression in a word which was then frequently used to symbolise the sum of all these mundane elegancies. The women of those days were not more beautiful than are the women of the Republic; but the women of the Empire had *chic*. Every one then who was somebody in society—man or woman—was *chic*, if not by nature or by grace, by example and habit. As this word is now obsolescent—at least, it would seem as if the qualities it was intended to express were gradually dying out. Nor is it surprising that it should be so—that with the change in the Government there should have been a social revulsion as well, and that Parisian society under the Republic should imitate the stiff and meagre conventionalities and formalisms of the *bourgeois* monarchy; should

Digitized by Google

sneer at "the meretricious splendour of the Imperial Court"; should scoff at the *cocodettes* and *femmes exotiques* of the Second Empire, and cultivate a narrow, repellent, and exclusive Nationalism; or, moved by the Democratic spirit that is now, at the end of the century, sweeping over the world, should be rather proud than otherwise of the cotton umbrellas of Louis Philippe, and the frugalities of M. Grévy.

The generous hospitality extended to foreign visitors by the Imperial Court was often—*sub rosâ*—the subject of envious or cynical comment on the part of those who witnessed it. But the journalists and chroniclers of the day were polite to strangers. Since the fall of the Empire, however, its "exoticism," as it is called, has become a sort of Turk's head with a certain class of writers. "The distinguished but slightly *bourgeois* element that constituted society under Louis Philippe"—to use the language of one of these writers—was shocked by the introduction into France of outdoor sports such as tennis, and archery, and hunting; and was made inconsolable on learning that "*l'argot britannique des jockeys*" had forced its way into salons once famous as the *officines* of the degermanised Hegelianism of M. Cousin. These political moralists and incorruptible patriots pretend to have discovered in a fondness for foreigners and foreign ideas the origin of the frivolity, the unbridled license and corruption which, they allege, prevailed during nearly the whole of the Imperial *régime;* and that one of the contributory causes of the present general decadence of French society—which they acknowledge—was the favour

Digitized by Google

accorded by the *Tout Paris* of that time to princes and nabobs from Asia and Africa, and to successful American speculators, and traders in pork and sewing machines. I have no doubt that there are persons who sincerely believe these things, but they are certainly not those who have most vehemently and persistently asserted them—something much easier to do than to make evident to the world the pre-eminent excellence and unsullied purity of political and social life in the French capital during the Monarchy and under the third Republic. Indeed, much of this silly criticism is only a rehash of the gossip of "salons" that under the Empire were *démodés* and had become merely the convenient *rendez-vous* of literary Bohemians, emancipated women and politicians out of business—in short of the uncompromising Opposition. The simple truth is that if foreigners were treated with especial hospitality and courtesy at the Imperial Court, it was only a proper and polite recognition of the homage the whole world was then pleased to pay to France, and to the sovereigns who represented with such distinction a nation which under their rule had gained the ascendency it lost at the Restoration, and had become once more, and beyond dispute, the dominant Power on the European Continent.

There was a time when all roads led to Rome. But when Rome ceased to be the Capital of the world and became the capital of Italy and the See of a Bishop, roads were built to meet the requirements of the multitude of foreigners who preferred to travel in other directions.

Digitized by Google

If there is no longer an American society here, if London has captured it—in part, at least—it is because Paris is now socially dead.

The lights that once shone here have been extinguished, the guests—the entertained as well as the entertainers—have gone. The very palace even, where they were wont to assemble, has been destroyed by the torch of the incendiary. The *chef d'œuvre* of Philibert Delorme and Jean Bullant, with its majestic pavilions, its noble galleries and salons, with all their rich embellishments, the work of three hundred years of the genius and æsthetic sentiment of France; the sculptures and paintings, the furniture and the tapestries, the polished bronze and marble, the splendid staircase—on the steps of which at either side the *cent gardes* stood like statues on State occasions; and the magnificent *Salle des Maréchaux*—where the great ceremonies were held—resplendent with mural decorations and velvet draperies, and traceries of gold, and superb chandeliers hanging from the ceiling like vast masses of jewels, and adorned with the portraits and busts of dead heroes; and the brilliant uniforms and elegant toilettes, and the music, and the flowers, and the spectacular effects of the moving and constantly changing scene, which opened to the admiring eyes of the throng a new world of beauty and of grace—all these glories and these pageants have vanished, and the world now knows them, and will know them, no more for ever—except as history or legend. *Sunt lacrimæ rerum.*

It has been the habit of Americans to say of

Digitized by Google

Napoleon III. that he was not friendly to our Government during the War of the Rebellion.

At the beginning of this war, it is quite certain that nearly everybody in Europe felt a sympathy for the South, for it seemed to be the weaker party. Sharing this general feeling, the Emperor may have had, moreover, a passing and chivalric sentiment of admiration for the stubborn, plucky, and gallant resistance which the seceding States offered to the Federal Government. It should be remembered also that a very considerable part of the territory of the Confederacy once belonged to France, and that the largest and richest city of the South—New Orleans—to great numbers of Frenchmen has always seemed to be a city of their own people.

Then, again, commercial interests were deeply concerned, and became more and more so as the war went on. National industries were paralysed and markets lost. Thousands of working men were idle.[1] And

[1] A bill that opened a credit of five millions of francs in behalf of the working men in the manufacturing districts especially affected by the American war was passed in January, 1863, by the unanimous consent of the French Assembly. But as early as March, 1862, the Emperor had sent as a personal gift to the operatives—principally in cotton mills—now out of work, the sum of 250,000 francs. "In some departments the sufferings of these men were very severe. In that of the *Seine Inférieure* the number of labourers who were thrown out of work was estimated at one hundred and thirty thousand. Private charity co-operated with the Legislature, and on January 26th two million francs had already been absorbed. The resignation and patriotic attitude of the working men were generally commended; and on May 4th the Legislature voted a new credit of one million two hundred thousand francs in their behalf."—*American Annual Cyclopedia.*

Digitized by Google

after great battles had been fought that decided nothing, and apparently tended to no definite conclusion, the people, more particularly in England and France, began to grow tired of hearing of the continued slaughter in what, to them, seemed to be an interminable war.

The French, however, were less interested than the English in the final issue of the war; and the French Press was much more moderate in its tone than the English Press, from which, however, it obtained most of its information and misinformation with respect to American affairs. Few Americans living, in the present era of good feeling, have any adequate idea of the intense hostility exhibited towards the Government of President Lincoln in English official circles and in the British Parliament, not by the Tory opposition alone, but by the leading representatives of the Liberal Government of the day—Gladstone, Roebuck, Lord Brougham—Blanche, Tray, and Sweetheart—it was the same cry: "Jefferson Davis has created a new nation and the Yankee war must be stopped." [1]

The Southern Confederacy was ably represented in Europe; its agents were numerous, intelligent, and active. But public sympathy was of little practical service to their cause; what they wanted to secure was the effective aid of the European governments—recognition, at least. In France, especially, their work was principally within official circles—although unofficial. Mr. Slidell, the Commissioner of the Confederate Government, unrecognised at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, sought to confer with other members of the

[1] See Appendix IV.

Digitized by Google

Imperial Government and directly with the Emperor himself. In this and in all his doings he had the active co-operation of large numbers of Southern men and women who resided in Paris during the war; and the Southern ladies, who formed a brilliant and influential society, vied with each other in their endeavours to enlist in support of their cause every one connected with the Imperial Court. It was most natural, since they were pleading for their homes and their families. Many of them had fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons fighting for what they regarded as birthrights. Their zeal, their strenuous efforts, and continued labour were not in vain, for the Court was almost entirely gained over to their side. The consequence was that the Emperor was constantly surrounded by those who sympathised with the South.

I regret to say that there was another reason for this sympathy: there were men at Court holding high official positions who acted entirely from motives of self-interest. There were, to my knowledge, offers of large quantities of cotton made to some of these persons if by their influence they could induce the Emperor to recognise the Southern Confederacy. The Emperor was, at times, absolutely beset by these people. According to them, the South was sure of success, and the inability of the Federal Government to carry on the war much longer was a constant theme with them. The Emperor listened to these statements in his usual quiet way, occasionally smiling, but whether because he was pleased or incredulous was never known; for he was never betrayed into consenting to an act or giving an opinion inconsistent

Digitized by Google

with an attitude of complete neutrality, although he often expressed his desire, in the interest of humanity, to see the war brought to a close, in order that the suffering and loss of life necessarily caused by this cruel conflict might cease.

But when the real causes that led to the secession of the Southern States from the Federal Union began to be apparent, and it became clear that the leaders in this movement had but one end in view, namely, the creation of a powerful Republic for the perpetuation of human slavery, it grew more and more difficult for the Emperor, as for many others who could not fail to watch this great struggle with intense interest, to reconcile their very natural sympathies for the weak with a desire for the triumph of right and justice, and the advancement of civilisation and happiness among men. However brilliantly the commercial benefits to Europe of a great cotton-growing, free-trade American Republic might be set forth, the condition on which alone they could be obtained—a sanction for the servitude of the black race—was intolerable to the European conscience. No man understood this better than Napoleon III. But the opinion of others was unnecessary in this case, for the thought of servitude was always repugnant to him.

While a prisoner at Ham he wrote: "To day the object of enlightened governments should be to devote their efforts to hasten the period when men may say, 'The triumph of democratic ideas has caused' the extinction of pauperism; the triumph of the French Revolution has put an end to serfdom; the triumph

Digitized by Google

of Christianity has destroyed slavery.'" And when finally he became Emperor, he did not forget his words; for the single object of his own life, constantly in mind to its very end, was to see these ideas realised in history.

I had personally the greatest respect for the American Minister at the French Court, Mr. William M. Dayton. He was an able lawyer, a most honourable and upright man, beloved by all who knew him, and universally esteemed. But Mr. Dayton was an exceeding modest man, with a fine sense of the dignity of his office, and certainly would not have considered it proper that he should attempt to represent the United States before the French Government in any other than a strictly diplomatic way.

As a simple American citizen, I was free from all official responsibility. I knew that I could be of great service to my country, and whenever I felt that I ought to act or speak, I was restrained by no fear of being too intrusive or too strenuous. At the beginning of the war the Federal Government was unable to arm the soldiers who were called out by the President, and efforts were made to obtain military supplies in Europe. And I am happy to say that in my capacity of private citizen I was able to obtain from a French company a large quantity of firearms which were sent with other military stores to the United States; and—what is of more importance in this connection—that the transaction was effected with the knowledge and permission of Napoleon III.

With the facilities I had of communicating directly

Digitized by Google

with the Emperor and coming in contact, as I did every day, with the principal personages about the Court, and the most distinguished men in the Legislature, the Army, the Church, and in every walk of life, and with the members of their families, I had very frequent and unusual opportunities of defending the cause of our National Government. Moreover, my relations with my compatriots, my presumed acquaintance with American affairs, the deep interest I took in the preservation of our Union, and the confidence with which I predicted it, caused me and my opinions to be much sought after; and particularly as I, excepting perhaps Prince Napoleon, was the only person with pronounced Northern views having frequent access to the Emperor. I firmly believed in the eventual success of the Federal Government, and being almost alone in that belief, I was compelled to keep myself well informed with respect to everything that might strengthen it and furnish me with facts and arguments to support and add weight to my assertions. I was constantly on the look-out for the latest news, and took special pains to meet and converse with those persons coming from America who could give me information, so that I might communicate it to the Emperor, who was never unwilling to hear "the other side." It was, therefore, necessary to be always at work to meet the statements, and thwart the designs, and destroy the hopes of the agents, accredited or unaccredited, of the Confederate Government, for "those who hear only one bell hear only one sound." I accordingly, as long as this terrible war lasted, continued to do what in ordinary

Digitized by Google

circumstances is either not done, or is effected through diplomatic channels.

I always let Mr. Dayton know that I was keeping the Emperor informed of what was passing; and he rendered me all the assistance he could, never feeling that I was in any way interfering with his duties or prerogatives. A more patriotic, generous, and unselfish man could not be found.

I particularly endeavoured to convey to the mind of the Emperor some idea of the fervent patriotism, the indomitable courage, the inexhaustible patience, and the undying devotion to their cause, of the men of the North. And I never lost an occasion to show him the progress we had made, or to call his attention to what our troops were doing. I supplied him continually with documents and newspapers containing important information relating to the war, and with maps that would aid him in following the movements of the different armies in the field. These were placed in a room at the Tuileries near his private cabinet. Here he frequently went to consult the maps, and to mark, with pins to which little flags were attached, the positions of the opposing armies. At times he was greatly interested in watching the movements of these armies, and made them even the subjects of critical technical study.

Thus he was able to estimate the value of the assertions of those who surrounded him, and sought to bring him to the point of acknowledging the Southern Confederacy; and so it happened that when they felt most sure of accomplishing their purpose they found him to be immovable. His reticence puzzled them.

Digitized by Google

And yet, sometimes, he surprised them by statements showing that he knew more about the war, and its probable duration, and the final result, than they had imagined possible. On one occasion, that came within my knowledge, to a person who had reported to him a great Confederate victory, he replied quietly, but with a most crushing effect:

"The facts are quite contrary to what you have been telling me."

One afternoon, in the summer of 1862, while driving in the Bois de Boulogne, I met Mr. N. M. Beckwith, who informed me that on the following evening Mr. Roebuck was to make a statement in the House of Commons relating a conversation he had had with the Emperor at Fontainebleau a few days before; his purpose being to show that in this interview the Emperor had given him assurances that he would not be indisposed to intervene in behalf of the Southern Confederacy under certain conditions agreed upon with the English Government.

I thought over the matter during the night, and came to the conclusion that if the Emperor had had a conversation with Mr. Roebuck it had not been of such a nature as to authorise him to announce, or even to attempt to foreshadow, in Parliament the Imperial policy with respect to this subject. I knew Mr. Roebuck was interested in giving the conversation such a colour that it would seem, to those who heard him, that the Emperor had decided to join with England in this much-desired alliance in behalf of the Confederacy. I had, however, personal knowledge

Digitized by Google

of the views entertained by the Emperor, and was confident that he had no such intention, but was determined not to recognise the Confederacy, to observe the strictest neutrality, and to intervene only in case of our manifest inability to bring the war to an end ourselves. To such a strait he did not believe we would come. And it was for this reason that he had refused all the entreaties, not only of English statesmen, but of those about him, of some of his own ministers, and more especially of M. de Persigny, who never lost an occasion to present the case of the Confederates as favourably as possible, and to insist on the utter inability of our Government to put down the rebellion. Nevertheless Mr. Beckwith's statement was so precise that I resolved to see the Emperor and ascertain what possible foundation there might be for it.

With this purpose in view I started early the next morning for Fontainebleau. I saw the Emperor as soon as he had left his bed, and communicated to him what I had learned about Mr. Roebuck's intention. I asked him if anything in the conversation he had had with that very active Member of Parliament could be construed into a promise to recognise the Southern Confederacy on certain conditions; and if Mr. Roebuck had his permission to make an announcement to that effect in the House of Commons. His Majesty most unhesitatingly denied having given him any assurances or promises whatsoever. The conversation, he said, had been general, and he should be greatly astonished if Roebuck were so to report the conversation that it could be considered as containing a promise or pledge

Digitized by Google

on his part to act in relation to the matter conjointly with the British Government. So anxious was he to avoid any such interpretation of the conversation, that he decided, at my suggestion, to have a telegram sent to a Member of Parliament, directing him, in case Mr. Roebuck should make such a statement, to deny immediately that there had been any pledge or promise, or that he was in any way bound by the remarks of that gentleman.

This was done, and when Mr. Roebuck, in the course of a speech, referred to his having seen the Emperor of the French at Fontainebleau a few days before, and began to report the conversation which had taken place on that occasion, he was immediately informed that a telegram had been received from the Emperor stating that the conversation had been entirely private.

Besides the influences the Emperor was continually under, coming from his *entourage* and from interested private individuals, much pressure was brought to bear on him from several foreign governments—especially the English—to induce him to recognise the Southern Confederacy. I am in possession of positive information upon this subject. I have seen and read, and have had in my hands, papers sent to the Emperor, and coming from the English Foreign Office, in which it was proposed that France should join with England in recognising the Confederacy. This is at variance with the usually received impression. It is generally believed that France and her Government, and the Emperor personally, were anxious to recognise the Confederacy; and to that end solicited the co-opera-

Digitized by Google

tion of England. I insist that this was not the case, and that the contrary was true. The Emperor never came at any time to the point of believing, as Palmerston did, that it was best to recognise the Southern Confederacy. After some of the failures and defeats of our army, it is not to be wondered at if, in common with nearly every one in Europe, he had some doubts of the final result.

Those were dark days that followed the failure of the Peninsular campaign and the battles of the second Bull Run. Then it was that Gladstone made his notorious speech at Newcastle, and that even the friends of the Union in Europe began to grow faint-hearted. It was of this time that Lowell spoke when he said of Charles Francis Adams, "None of our generals in the field, not Grant himself, did us better or more trying service than he in his forlorn outpost in London." Then it was, also, that the Emperor expressed the opinion that *perhaps* the Federal Government might be induced to accept the friendly mediation of England, Russia, and France, and consent to an *armistice;* and if so, that the offer of such mediatory services was desirable. But this opinion was suggested by humane rather than by political considerations.[1] At the outbreak of the War of the

[1] The Emperor, in his address to the Legislative Body, January 12, 1863, said:

"The situation of the Empire would be flourishing had not the American war come to dry up one of the most fruitful sources of our industry. The unnatural stagnation of business has caused in several places a state of destitution which is worthy of our solicitude, and an appropriation will be asked of you in behalf of those who are supporting with resignation the effect of a calamity which it is

Digitized by Google

Rebellion the relations of the French Government with the Federal Government were very friendly. Our War Department obtained military supplies of various kinds in France without difficulty; and the views expressed by the Emperor in July, 1861, with respect to the blockade of the Southern coast, were entirely satisfactory to Mr. Lincoln. It was even supposed, so marked was the absence in France of the hostile feeling which prevailed in England, that, under certain circumstances, the Imperial Government might give direct assistance to the cause of the Union. Or was the suggestion of such assistance actually made to Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward by Prince Napoleon when he visited Washington in the summer of 1861? Whatever answer may be given to this question, it is quite certain that Mr. Seward entertained the idea of the friendly neutrality of France at the time of the Trent affair; and, if it was among the reasons that led him at first to decline to surrender the Confederate Commissioners, it was also because of the very amicable relations between the French Legation and the State Department that Mr. Seward was disposed to listen to the representations on this subject made to him by M. Mercier at the request of M. Thouvenel, acting at the suggestion of the Emperor. Indeed, it was because the friendly

not in our power to bring to an end. Nevertheless, I have attempted to send across the Atlantic counsels inspired by the sincerest sympathy, but the great maritime Powers not having as yet thought it proper to join with me, I have postponed until a more propitious time the offer of mediation, the object of which was to arrest the effusion of blood and prevent the exhaustion of a country whose future cannot be indifferent to us."

Digitized by Google

advice given on this occasion had proved so successful —had apparently prevented a disastrous war between the United States and Great Britain—that the Emperor was finally induced to sound the English and Russian Governments with respect to the expediency of offering to the belligerents, conjointly with the Imperial Government, their friendly services as mediators.

But while the relations between France and the United States were constantly maintained upon an amicable footing until near the end of the secession war, the relations between the English and the French Governments during the same period, if not strained —in the diplomatic sense of that word—were certainly very far from being cordial. Not only was the hostility then shown by Lords Palmerston and Russell to the policy of the Empire, with respect to nearly every question concerning European politics, a cause of almost constant irritation, but the abusive language employed by the Press and by individuals, who were presumed to represent the English Government, when speaking of Napoleon III.—language which often exceeded in bitterness that with which Mr. Lincoln was bespattered by the same Press and the same persons—was keenly felt by the Emperor, and was frequently the subject of his indignant remonstrance. The Emperor, when his co-operation was desired by the English Government contemplating an intervention in American affairs, was in no humour to listen to the solicitations of the men who were responsible for that Government and were, at the same time, his personal enemies and the friends of his political

Digitized by Google

enemies. The Emperor never wholly gave up the thought that ultimately the North would succeed. In his opinion it would be a misfortune for the country to be divided. In fact, a division of the United States into separate and independent governments would have been in conflict with the principle of "great agglomerations," of "nationalities and natural boundaries," which was the foundation of his theory of international relations. It would not only have been contrary to his general political policy, but it would have been unnatural for him to wish to see our Union dismembered. No. That was never his wish.

I could furnish, were it necessary to do so, innumerable proofs to sustain these affirmations. I will here state what took place one day in the summer of 1864, as also its consequence—an episode that brings to my mind delightful reminiscences of men now and for evermore famous in our national history.

I was sent for by the Emperor to come to Compiègne. This was just after the great battles of the Wilderness and the failure of Grant's first movement against Richmond; when Early's army was in sight of the Capitol, and news of the capture of Washington was expected at any moment. His Majesty informed me that he had received a communication from London, in which he was seriously advised, urged, and even begged to recognise the Southern Confederacy.

The substance of the note was to this effect: "The Washington Government have no chance of getting through with this cruel war. It is now time it should

Digitized by Google

cease, and a stop should be put to it." And the Emperor was told that if he would take the initiative in the work of ending this war public opinion in England would force the Government to co-operate with him.

"You see how hard I am pressed," the Emperor said, "yet I have not yielded, because of the assurances I have received—and from you among others—that it is only a question of time when the war must end in the complete success of the Federal Government."

I told him the war was certainly approaching an end; that the resources of the South were almost exhausted; that, with nearly a million seasoned soldiers in the field, the military power of the North was irresistible. So I pleaded for hands off; and pleading with the Emperor not to yield to the pressure of private interest, nor to be influenced by communications of the kind he had just received, but to await events, I became warm, and was quite carried away by my subject. I told him that the recognition of the Confederacy would only cause much more blood to flow; that foreign intervention would be useless; that the people of the North would never permit any intervention from abroad in their affairs—no matter what sacrifices it might be necessary to make, either of money or of men.

Just at this moment a door, which was hidden with upholstery so as to be invisible, opened as if by magic, and the Prince Imperial, then a beautiful boy of eight years, appeared before us in a most charming and surprised manner—as he did not know that any

Digitized by Google

one was in the private room of his father. He had thought him alone, and began to apologise for his intrusion.

But it furnished the occasion and gave me the courage to say, "Sire, you cannot think of recognising the Government of Jefferson Davis, for the dismemberment of our great Union founded by Washington would be a crime. No! Were it done by your aid the States of the North would never forget you, nor cease to curse your name. For this boy's sake, you cannot act. He is to succeed you, and the people of my country would visit it upon his head if you had helped to destroy our great and happy Union.

"You cannot think of the miseries it would entail. You cannot think of doing this. Keep our friendship —our ancient friendship that was sealed with the blood of France—for your son." Continuing, I said, "I will go to the United States. I will leave by the very first steamer, and learn for myself what the situation is—what is the feeling of the people, and what is the power of the Government. I will go directly to Washington and see Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward, and I will report to you the exact truth, whether they believe, and have reason to believe, that the end of the war is not far off." And I entreated his Majesty to suspend all action until I could report to him what I might learn about the war by personal observation and inquiry.

The Emperor, who had listened to me without saying a word, when I had finished speaking said, "Well, Evans, go! I shall be pleased to hear from

Digitized by Google

you, and to get your impressions and opinions, and"—smiling as he spoke—"I don't think I shall recognise the Southern Confederacy until you have had an opportunity of communicating to me the results of your visit."

Accordingly I left Paris, with Mrs. Evans, on the 11th of August, for Liverpool, where, the following Saturday, we embarked on the *China* for New York, which port we reached ten days later—August 23rd.

After a brief visit to my family I proceeded to the Capital, where I was received by Mr. Seward, Secretary of State. I told him the object of my visit was to learn the true state of affairs with respect to the rebellion, and whether there was any prospect of a speedy termination of the war. I was astonished to find Mr. Seward rather gloomy and dispirited. He said things looked bad. I was introduced to other members of the Cabinet, and found that they also were feeling very uneasy. I was the more surprised at this feeling, as the fall of Atlanta had just been announced.

It was not, however, so much the military situation as the political outlook that was troubling them. A presidential election was to take place in November. The Democratic party had pronounced the war to be a failure, and, with this as the issue before the people, had nominated General McClellan as their candidate for the Presidency. Mr. Lincoln was again the candidate of the Republican party for that office; but his re-election was by no means certain, and his defeat would have been disastrous to the cause of the Union.

Digitized by Google

I was received afterward by President Lincoln, whom I had met at his home some years before, having been introduced to him at Springfield, in the year 1860, before he was elected President, but after his nomination. Remembering my former visit to him, he greeted me with much affability, and spoke of that meeting, and of persons both of us knew. When I told him what I had come to America for he seemed much pleased, and said I would be given every opportunity to see for myself, and would be supplied with all possible information concerning the situation.

I informed the President of my efforts to convince the Emperor that the North would succeed in suppressing the Rebellion, and related to him how his Majesty was pressed on every side to acknowledge the Southern Confederacy, how I had told him that such recognition could only lead to complications which might prove disastrous, and that I had entreated him to suspend any action in this direction until I could lay before him the facts as they appeared to Americans who were on the ground, and were most familiar with the conditions of the contest, and most competent to forecast its result.

I had a long conversation with Mr. Lincoln on this occasion, but before the interview ended Mr. Seward joined us, and I was furnished by these eminent men with information that gave me a very clear insight into the situation from the official or governmental point of view. Mr. Lincoln was in much the better spirits, and the more sanguine, summing up his forecast of coming events in his homely way as follows:

Digitized by Google

"Well, I guess we shall be able to pull through; it may take some time. But we shall succeed, *I think*," with an emphasis on the last words that was significant.

It was then proposed that I should go to City Point and see General Grant. It was thought that a visit to the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, then engaged in siege operations in front of Petersburg and Richmond, might supply me with some of the special facts I was in search of, and prove an object-lesson of great value to me in the accomplishment of my mission.

Arrangements were accordingly made for me to go to City Point on a "transport," the only means of conveyance that could be had. And so, after having been provided with letters of introduction and the necessary passes, on the morning of the 4th of September, accompanied by Mrs. Evans, my niece, and her husband, I sailed for Hampton Roads. The great heat compelled us to remain on deck; the boat was crowded with troops going to the front, and the mosquitoes, the noise and the confusion, and the want of beds, made the night one of the most disagreeable I ever experienced.

Arriving at Norfolk the next morning I saw for the first time the ruin and desolation wrought by the war. The town was full of soldiers and "contrabands," and nothing was going on but what related in some way to the war. Finding that I should be obliged to leave Mrs. Evans and my niece in this place, I obtained for them, after much searching,

Digitized by Google

lodgings with a private family. The food was coarse and badly cooked, and my wife and niece occupied a room in the garret that during the day was intolerably hot, and where, at night, they were nearly suffocated. This I learned afterward; for before noon I left Norfolk, and, taking a boat at Fortress Monroe, arrived at General Grant's headquarters in the evening of the same day.

The General received me in a simple, off-hand way; invited me to dine with him; and made me as comfortable as could be expected in time of war and in camp. I explained the object of my mission, and he seemed pleased that I had come to see him and learn for myself how things were going on. I found the General delightful in conversation. As he was much occupied during the day, our talks were principally in the evening—after his coloured boy had made up a large fire in front of his tent; for although the days were hot, the evenings were cool and damp, and the fire kept off the mosquitoes. Then it was that the General took his seat in a camp-chair before the burning logs, with his staff about him, and also his visitors, of whom there were almost always a number at headquarters. Throwing his leg over the arm of his chair, after having lighted a cigar, the General was ready for a talk.

We discussed not only questions relating to the war, but all sorts of subjects—political, social, and personal. I was astonished to find the commander of so large an army, who had already shown extraordinary talent and had gained great victories, was one of the most simple-minded of men. Of what was passing in

Digitized by Google

Europe and in other parts of the world he was almost utterly ignorant. Concerning the French Empire, its government, and its economical and social life, he had not the slightest idea. But he never seemed tired of hearing about the Emperor and the Court. The Empress, her beauty, and her never-failing kindness to Americans, interested him greatly; and it delighted him to have me dwell upon the attractions and pleasures of Paris. On one occasion he remarked: "When I have got through with this war that we have on hand, I hope to go abroad and see for myself all these beautiful things. I shall want rest; my only fear is that I cannot afford it, for I am not rich, and I am afraid I shall be obliged to wait a long time before I can go over to see you, and enjoy all these things we have spoken about."

I replied: "Why, General, when you have finished the war, as you seem to be sure you will, to the satisfaction of your country and the Government that placed you in command, the people will put you up for President; and, if so, I have no doubt you will be elected."

Seeming to hesitate for a moment, he said: "This I doubt, and shall never consent to. I may be successful as a military man, but I know nothing of politics. I never voted but once in my life, and then I made a mistake. I never interested myself in politics. Once when I was going home, after taking a load of wood into town, my friends met me and insisted that I should vote, as it was election day. I was persuaded to do so, and threw my vote for Mr. Buchanan; and that, as you see, was a mistake."

Digitized by Google

"But, General, other men have risen to the Presidency, having had no more experience in political matters than yourself. Each of our wars has produced a President—Washington, Jackson, Taylor——"

"No," he replied, "I had rather go abroad and see something of the Old World."

He was very positive about the final result of the war. He was frank and unreserved in giving his opinions, and freely expressed to me his hopes. He impressed me with his sincerity, his simplicity, and at the same time his entire confidence in himself. On my asking him when he thought the war would be brought to a close, he said: "Not until we get rid of some of these political generals. It is these men who have kept us so long from putting an end to the war."

During my visit he had long interviews with General Butler. He criticised the works at Bermuda Hundred as designed and carried on by General Butler; and made no secret of his dissatisfaction with much that was done by *political generals*, as he called them.

One day, when General Butler was dining with us, General Grant inquired of him what he was doing over at Bermuda Hundred; he asked him about the canal he was cutting, and many other questions concerning what was passing at his headquarters. General Butler invited him to come over and see for himself. Accordingly, the next day, General Grant, with his staff, set out to visit the camps around Richmond, and he invited me to accompany him. The General rode a big bay horse, and he offered me for this

Digitized by Google

excursion the black mare that, as he told me, he had taken from the farm of Jefferson Davis in Mississippi, after the surrender of Vicksburg. A very excellent riding horse she was, and the General set much store by her. I was afterward told that it was a great favour for him to lend this mare to any one.

We visited Generals Meade, Hancock, Butler, and others, riding along almost in sight of the city. We were so near that we could see the Confederate pickets, some of whom were reading newspapers; and occasionally a shot came hurtling over our heads. The General never seemed to think his life was in danger. While visiting the works that had been constructed by order of General Butler, he looked from behind the earthen defences, and at times exposed himself so much, that his officers called his attention to the risk he was running. Yet he was not a foolhardy man.

We dined at the camp or headquarters of General Hancock, and I was much impressed with the military bearing of the General.

While I was at City Point, General Grant had a visit from some old friends of his. Among them was Mr. Washburne, afterward Minister to Paris. The General told us that he was having a correspondence with General Sherman concerning a movement he was about to make; and I believe I was one of the first persons who knew something of the plan of campaign agreed upon.[1] This march to the sea, the

[1] Dr. Evans is in error here. And yet his statement is interesting. It goes to show that the idea which finally found its realisation in the "march to the sea" was in the air, so to speak, at the time of

Digitized by Google

getting behind the army of Northern Virginia, seemed to Grant the one thing that was needed to bring about the end; and he was right in believing it to be so. For, as every one knows, Lee's army was finally crushed between the columns of Sherman and Grant.

his visit to the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac. It was about this time that General Grant wrote to Mr. Lincoln and pointed out the importance of getting behind or "south of the enemy." It was then also that he sent to Atlanta an aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Porter (now General Horace Porter), with a letter and instructions to confer with General Sherman, and arrange, if possible, for a combined movement. But, in fact, it was as late as October 9th before Sherman seems to have seriously thought it would be possible—as he then wrote—"to move through Georgia smashing things, to the sea"; or to say, "I can make this march and make Georgia howl." And this opinion was expressed only after Hood had moved from Sherman's front, and had occupied or threatened his line of communications with Chattanooga. Grant, at this time, while most anxious to get "behind the army of Northern Virginia," had doubts about making Savannah the objective point of the movement, and particularly about cutting loose entirely from Atlanta. As late as November 1st, he said in a despatch to Sherman—"If you see a chance of destroying Hood's army, attend to that first, and make your other move secondary." The very next day, however, General Grant consented that Sherman should carry out his plan of campaign as he had proposed; and a fortnight later, on the 15th of November, General Sherman began his famous march through Georgia from Atlanta to the sea.

Our recollections of events after the lapse of many years, if sometimes at fault in matters of detail, often bring back into the light important facts that have grown dim with time or have vanished altogether from the record. Every act of man must exist as an idea before it can exist as a reality. To crush the military power of the Confederacy between the two armies of Sherman and Grant was the subject on which the hopes and the thoughts of the North were concentrated in the autumn of 1864. Hood's blunder opened the way and made it possible for General Sherman to realise his dream and to turn the talk of the camp-fires into one of the most decisive deeds in American history.

Digitized by Google

During my visit to City Point I had an excellent opportunity of becoming acquainted with many things connected with the maintenance of a great army engaged in actual warfare, such as the commissariat, the transport service, and the provisions made for the care of the sick and wounded. This last subject was one that interested me particularly.

After remaining at General Grant's headquarters five days, I rejoined Mrs. Evans at Norfolk, and we returned to Washington. It was not long before I discovered the existence of a more hopeful feeling, not only among those who directly represented the Government, but generally among the people. The capture of Atlanta, by Sherman, the final destruction of Early's army by Sheridan in the valley of the Shenandoah, the evident collapse of the political plot to put McClellan in the place of Lincoln, these things encouraged the Government greatly, and filled the minds of the loyal men of the North with hope and confidence—a confidence that was contagious.

Very soon feeling, myself, entirely convinced that the end of the war was not far distant, I so informed the Emperor.

Upon my return to Paris in November, one of the first remarks he made to me was: "When the plan of campaign arranged between Grant and Sherman was reported to me, I saw by my maps that *it was the beginning of the end*" (*ce fut le commencement de la fin*). These were the Emperor's very words.

How often I have heard him express himself as more than satisfied that he had waited and not acted precipitately during our great internecine war; for to

Digitized by Google

him the friendship of the whole United States was important. Yet he has suffered severely in American opinion through those who believed and gave currency to the false statement that he wished to divide us, and to that end had solicited the co-operation of the English Government.

Americans would do well to remember that if the English Government, represented by Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, did not intervene during the War of the Rebellion, the principal cause was the personal reluctance of the Queen and the Prince Consort to give countenance to such a policy. I do not know that there exists any official proof of this. But that the neutrality of the English Government at this time should be attributed to the friendly feeling of the Queen towards the cause for which the Northern States were contending has always been firmly believed by the American people.

Now there can be no question that M. Thouvenel and M. Drouyn de Lhuys and other official representatives of the Imperial Government were as ready to intervene in behalf of the Southern Confederacy as were Lord John Russell and his associates. But the Imperial Government did not take one single step in that direction. It did not recognise the *de facto* Government established at Richmond. And to the question, Why not? the answer is to be found in the fact—for the truth of which I can vouch—that, personally, Napoleon III. shrank, as did Queen Victoria, from the thought of actively contributing to the building of a great State whose corner-stone was human slavery. Any one who knows anything of the Em-

Digitized by Google

peror or of his opinions knows that he was seldom in accord with his ministers on questions relating to international affairs. This, it may be said, was one of the causes of the apparently uncertain and indecisive character of the Imperial policy; for there were times when, after his Minister for Foreign Affairs had said one thing, the Emperor did not hesitate to say exactly the contrary. Therefore no one need be surprised that, whatever may have been the wishes of his ministers with respect to the Southern Confederacy, Napoleon III. should never have ceased to be at heart a friend of the North.

Those persons who, careless of the facts, are in the habit of meting out responsibility in accordance with their prejudices and political feelings, and who are guilty of the gross injustice of holding Napoleon III. directly responsible for public opinion in France during these years, should at least be sufficiently open-minded to observe that this opinion was never exhibited in any act of hostility to the Federal Government, either on the land or on the sea. If the neutrality of the English Government is generously attributed to the personal influence of the Queen, it is but fair to give some credit to the Emperor for the neutrality of his Government during our Civil War—a neutrality so strictly observed that no *Alabamas* were allowed to escape from French ports to destroy our commerce.

And yet in these later years I have often wondered that the Emperor did not recognise the Southern Confederacy. It would have been entirely in accordance with our own international policy, which has been, and is, to recognise every *de facto* Government without

Digitized by Google

regard to its origin, and without waiting to become assured of its stability. Within forty-eight hours after the Paris mob had set up a Government at the Hôtel de Ville, this Government was officially recognised by Mr. Washburne, the American Minister accredited to the Court of the Tuileries.

If there be any Americans who are still inclined to resent the attitude they believe Napoleon III. to have assumed towards our country during the War of the Secession, it is well that they should be reminded of our own public policy in similar cases; and more than this, if they would be just, that they should consider how much—and to his everlasting credit—the Emperor resisted when declining to recognise the Southern Confederacy. No real friend of the Federal Government could have been expected to do more.[1]

I have not here to speak of the attempt to establish an empire in Mexico, nor yet to be its apologist. This unfortunate affair into which the Emperor allowed himself to be drawn, partly by unwise friends and partly by interested counsellors, went far to give Americans the right to believe that he bore us no good-will. It may be well, however, before pronouncing a harsh judgment, to remember the condition of Mexico, suffering from chronic revolution,

[1] In a private letter written to General James Watson Webb in March, 1863, when referring to this war, the Emperor says: "As regards the war which desolates your country, I profoundly regret it; for I do not see how and when it will end, and it is not to the interest of France that the United States should be weakened by a struggle without any good results possible. In a country as sensible as America, it is not by arms that domestic quarrels should be settled, but by votes, meetings, and assemblies."

Digitized by Google

repudiating its debts and international obligations, and, at the time, in a state of absolute anarchy. Many European Powers hoped to see a responsible, stable Government established under Maximilian. The Emperor's motives were good and his action well meant; only he did not sufficiently take into account the very great difficulties that would have to be met and overcome at home, as well as abroad, in order to succeed in an attempt to create a new empire on the American continent.

The Emperor was deeply moved by the news of the assassination of President Lincoln and Mr. Seward—for it was at first reported that Mr. Seward had been killed also. He was, however, not inclined to attribute to this act any political significance. "The war ended," he said, "with the capitulation of General Lee, and the act, consequently, having no rational purpose, must be regarded as that of a political fanatic. Such men are to be found in all countries and as ready to strike at those who represent the sovereignty of the people as at those who claim to rule by Divine right." The Empress, also, was greatly shocked when she was informed of this dreadful affair, and wrote to Mrs. Lincoln a private letter in which she expressed the sincere sympathy she felt for her in her bereavement under such tragic circumstances.

And here I may say that her Majesty took a most lively interest in the progress of the War of the Secession from its very beginning. Not that she cared to hear about the battles and sieges, and the exploits of armies and commanders, but she was deeply

Digitized by Google

concerned to know what was being done to alleviate the immense amount of suffering inevitable from diseases and wounds in a war carried on over such a vast and thinly inhabited country and on such a scale. As early as 1862—about the time General McClellan opened the campaign that came to its close at Harrison's Landing on the James River—she asked me if I could furnish her with any information respecting the provisions that had been made by our Government for the care of the sick and wounded; and more particularly to what extent, if any, voluntary aid was supplementing the official service. Having inquired into this matter, I explained to her Majesty how the medical service of the United States Army was organised; and informed her that a Sanitary Commission had been created, unofficial in character but recognised by the Government, the object of which was to inspect the camps and hospitals, bring to the notice of the proper authorities any neglect or want therein, and direct the distribution of voluntary assistance, whether in the form of material gifts or personal service. I told her that the people of the North had responded most generously to the calls for contributions issued by the Commission; that its agents were working harmoniously with the regular medical staff; and that never before in any army had such large provision been made for the sanitation of the troops while in camp and the care of the sick and wounded. The Empress asked me to write out what I had told her about this Commission, which I did. A few days afterward I received from her the following letter:

Digitized by Google

[TRANSLATION]

"PARIS, *May* 13, 1862.

"DR. THOMAS W. EVANS,

"SIR: In reply to your letter, I thank you for the information which you have given me with respect to the organisation and the work of the United States Sanitary Commission.

"This institution interests me very greatly, and I love to think that it will not be long before many associations, animated as this one is by the spirit of charity and humanity, will be organised everywhere to give succour to the wounded and the sick—to friends and enemies alike.

"Believe me,

"Yours very sincerely,

"EUGÉNIE."

It was through the encouragement I received from her Majesty, perhaps more than from any other person, that I was induced to prepare a work on the United States Sanitary Commission, which was published in French, in 1865, under the title of "*La Commission Sanitaire des Etats-Unis; son origine, son organisation, et ses résultats.*"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FRANCE

The importance of the works of Napoleon III.—He created modern Paris; its parks and waterworks; its public buildings—Provincial cities reconstructed—Roads and railways extended—Credit institutions founded—Commercial treaties made—The increase of capital; of trade—The interest of the Emperor in the lodgings of artisans and the sanitation of cities—What the Emperor did for agriculture—His interests in the welfare of the industrial classes—How he came to the relief of the people at the time of the great inundations—The Exposition of 1867—A dreadful picture of moral corruption—The greatest work of Napoleon III.

NAPOLEON III. by most political and historical writers is not criticised, but calumniated. If his reign had ended successfully, his personal qualities would have exalted him to the skies; but since his career was destroyed by a reverse of fortune, his faults have been monstrously exaggerated, and few writers have endeavoured to remind the world of his public virtues and accomplishments. While, unfortunately, people in general are more inclined to listen to what is said about great men than to see and appreciate what is done by them, it is curious to notice that the purely dramatic and spectacular elements in the lives of the two Napoleons, as persons,

Digitized by Google

have been of such absorbing interest as to make us almost insensible of the importance of the really great constructive works relating to the administration of civil affairs, upon which imperishable foundation the reputation of both, as sovereigns, must ultimately rest.

I have already set forth with some particularity the traits of the Emperor's character that were most strongly impressed upon me during the long period of my personal relations with him; and I shall probably have occasion to refer to them again in the desultory way that reminiscences permit, and as the events and incidents of the narrative may suggest. But I should not feel that I had done justice to Napoleon III. if I failed, in my description of the man, to refer to his merits as a ruler, and made no mention of his work as an upbuilder of the nation. I shall therefore, in this chapter, submit to the reader's consideration a few facts that ought not to be overlooked or forgotten, and which, I trust, will be sufficient to prove that the Emperor not only cherished in his mind noble and generous ideas and purposes, but that he actually did a great deal for the welfare of his people and for the glory of France.

Baron Haussmann, the Prefect of the Seine, when he heard some one express admiration for the magnificent results obtained as the work of reconstructing and embellishing the city of Paris progressed, used to say: "It was the Emperor who marked out all this. I have only been his collaborator."

And if the "Great Baron" recognised the directing

Digitized by Google

mind and the will that created modern Paris, the Emperor himself always most generously acknowledged his obligation to this able and most devoted collaborator.

In 1858, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Boulevard Sebastopol, the Emperor said: "When succeeding generations shall traverse our great city, not only will they acquire a taste for the beautiful, from the spectacle of these works of art, but, in reading the names inscribed upon our bridges and our streets, they will recall to themselves the glory of our armies—from Rivoli to Sebastopol. All these grand results I owe to the co-operation of the Legislative Body, who, renouncing all provincial selfishness, have learned that a country like France should have a capital worthy of itself, and have not hesitated to grant the sums which the Government has solicited. I owe them also to the enlightened co-operation of the Municipal Council. But especially do I owe their prompt and judicious execution to the intelligent magistrate whom I have placed at the head of the Department of the Seine, who while maintaining in the finances of the city an order worthy of all praise, has been able in so short a time to complete enterprises so numerous, and that in the midst of obstacles incessantly arising from the spirit of routine and disparagement."

M. Maxime du Camp says: "If, by a fairy's wand, the Paris of the time of the Revolution of February could be brought back and exhibited to the modern world, people would wonder how a race which loves luxury so much as the Parisians do, could have lived

Digitized by Google

in such a pestilential and unhealthy city as the French capital was before Napoleon III., with the assistance of his intelligent Prefect Haussmann, changed Paris into the attractive place of residence which it has now become." [1]

The filthy and dangerous lanes of the Montagne Sainte-Genéviève, and the ugly wine-shops near the Arc de Triomphe, were, to use an expression of the author mentioned, "the plague-spots" through which the Emperor drew his pencil, erecting in their place broad streets and handsome boulevards. The whole city was reconstructed upon a grand plan. The special aim of the Emperor was to make the several quarters of his capital beautiful, and at the same time healthy, by changing the general style of the buildings, and by establishing a great number of public gardens and promenades, where the children and the aged and the infirm could enjoy the benefit of the fresh air and the sun. For if the West End of Paris had its Bois de Boulogne, to the East Side, the artisan quarter of the capital, was given to the Bois de Vincennes, the disposition of whose spacious grounds, with their broad avenues, superb trees, grassy lawns and fountains, and magnificent vistas, compels the admiration of every one. Nor should we forget to mention the Buttes-Chaumont, that exquisite little park opened in Belleville, in the slums of the city, which, as a work of art, is the most beautiful of all the Paris parks, and yet is so seldom seen by the foreign visitor.

For the same purpose the splendid sewers of

[1] "Paris, ses Organes, ses Fonctions et sa vie." Paris, Hachette et Cie., 1875.

Digitized by Google

Paris were constructed, which are the admiration of foreigners as well as of Parisians, and which, by their extent alone, create astonishment, for even in the year 1869 they were 518 kilometres (over 300 miles) in length.

In the year 1852 the city was not able to distribute more than 105,000 cubic metres of water per day, while under the Empire the waterworks were so improved that, in the year 1869, 538,000 cubic metres were furnished daily. But this was not all. As late as the year 1866 the water used by the inhabitants of Paris, even for domestic purposes, was taken almost entirely from the Seine and the river Marne. It was impossible to preserve it from pollution, and consequently typhoid was endemic in the city, and the death-rate was high. The serious defects, and the absolute inadequacy of the system employed to supply Paris with water, and especially with potable water, were frequently pointed out. But the great majority of Parisians would appear to have accepted as definitive the pronouncement of the hygienist Parmentier, the discoverer of the potato, who declared, in 1787, that "the water of the Seine unites all the qualities which could be desired to make it agreeable to the palate, light in the stomach, and favourable to digestion; and the Parisians are not wrong if they never end their eulogies of the Seine, and if they contend with assurance that its waters are the best of all waters." In the presence of such a prejudice, and in view of the prevailing ignorance with respect to sanitary matters, it is not surprising that practically nothing was done to improve a situation that was

Digitized by Google

becoming constantly more and more dangerous to the public health, until the Emperor took up the subject of supplying Paris with drinking water from uncontaminated sources. For this special purpose work was begun in 1864, and the aqueduct of the Dhuis was completed in 1866, at a cost of 18,000,000 francs; it was 131 kilometres in length, and brought into the city 25,000 cubic metres of water daily.

But in the meantime the ravages of the cholera, in 1865, had again drawn the attention of hygienists to the insufficiency of the water supply, and two years later the construction of the aqueduct of the Vanne was begun. This great work was finished at a cost of 52,000,000 francs; it was 173 kilometres in length, and provided Paris daily with 120,000 cubic metres of spring water of excellent quality.

The beauty of several of the public buildings erected by the late Emperor is an attraction and a delight to every visitor to Paris. But few Parisians even have any idea of the very large number of these buildings, or of the number of the great monumental constructions that were built in Paris during his reign; for as far as possible the Government of the Republic has carefully obliterated every name inscribed upon them, and every emblem they bore indicative of their origin. I shall therefore remind the reader that it was Napoleon III. who connected the Louvre with the Tuileries, who built the churches of Saint Augustin, La Trinité, Sainte-Clotilde, Saint Joseph, Saint Ambroise, Saint Eugène, Notre Dame-des-Champs, Saint Pierre de Mont Rouge, and many others; that it was he who erected or restored the

Digitized by Google

splendid edifices of the new Palais de Justice, the Tribunal de Commerce, the Hôtel Dieu, the Grand Opéra, the Halles Centrales, and the Temple; that it was he who built the great bridges over the Seine, the Pont Napoléon III., the Pont de Bercy, the Pont d'Arcola, the Pont Notre Dame, the Pont au Change, the Pont au Double, the Petit Pont, the Pont Louis Philippe, the Pont Saint Michel, the Pont de Solférino, the Pont des Invalides, the Pont d'Alma, and the Pont d'Auteuil; that it was he who surrounded the parks and the gardens with their gilded railings and erected their great entrance gates, and who adorned the French capital with fountains and statues, and a hundred other ornamental structures.

On account of the interest which the Emperor took in the arts and sciences, the collections of the Louvre were quadrupled; the so-called Campagne Galleries were purchased; the "Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l'industrie" was founded; the Musée d'Artillerie received rich additions; in the old Palace of Saint Germain the well-known archæological museum was created; the Musée de Cluny and the Tour Saint Jacques were restored; the Hôtel Carnavelet was changed into a museum for a collection of the antiquities of the city of Paris; the Imperial Library received some very valuable additions; and the Bibliothèque Sainte-Genévière was thrown open to the public.

In fact the city of Paris, as it appears to the visitor to-day, was created by Napoleon III.; for whatever public improvements have been made, since 1870, have been executed only to complete the original

Digitized by Google

plan of the Emperor and his famous Prefect of the Seine.[1]

"Victor Hugo," says Blanchard Jerrold in his "Life of Napoleon the Third," "dwells in a fashionable quarter of Paris, his beloved city, which had no existence when he went into exile. He tells every foreign visitor who calls on him that there have been three cities of the world—Athens, Rome, Paris; but when he says 'Paris-Urbs,' he forgets the sovereign who made her what she is, and laid the foundation of that matchless city of the future, which, according to him, will have the Arc de Triomphe for its centre."

It should be remembered, also, that these great public works were constructed not merely during the Imperial *régime*, but at the suggestion, and frequently by the command, of the Emperor himself; that they were, in a word, something more than the products of the general social demands and industrial activities and forces of the period. It is impossible to deny this. Who has not heard of the "Comptes fantastiques d'Haussmann"? Indeed, the opposition to nearly all these improvements, on the ground of their uselessness and extravagance, was so noisy and so general, while they were being executed, that its echoes are still to be heard whenever questions concerning public works in the city of Paris are under discussion in the Municipal Council or in the Chamber of Deputies.

[1] This statement was absolutely true when it was written, and excepting the improvements made in connection with the Exposition of 1900, among which the "Metropolitan" subway should be included, is true now, in 1905.

Digitized by Google

But while these improvements and embellishments of the capital were being made, the provincial cities, and the picturesque nooks and corners even, of the Empire were not neglected. Lord Malmesbury, writing in 1863, says: "I stopped a day at Carcassonne, an ancient city so famous for the desperate fighting of the Albigeois and the deeds of Simon de Montfort. The Emperor has had the city and fortifications restored exactly to the state they were in at this time; the streets are just wide enough for a cart to pass, and the towers and battlements are what they were in the thirteenth century. In every part of France he is making archæological restorations, and his active mind seems as much interested in this pursuit as it is in politics; but," he adds significantly, "as far as I can observe, the French do not appreciate his efforts as they deserve."

In the meantime the whole country was greatly benefited by works constructed with direct reference to the development of the national resources; and by the establishment or enlargement of public institutions, the creation of technical schools and reformations in the universities.

In order to facilitate communication throughout the Empire, 26,846 kilometres of macadamised roads were made, many rivers were rendered navigable, ports were improved, and the docks of Cherbourg were finished. The shipping employed in commerce, and especially that portion of it which was engaged in the coasting-trade, was considerably increased in tonnage and greatly improved; while the navy, that had previously

Digitized by Google

consisted of wooden sailing-vessels, was transformed into a fleet of armoured steamships.

The railways were extended over the whole of France; and in 1869 the total length of these roads amounted to 23,900 kilometres. The new system of telegraphy was inaugurated and rapidly developed.

In order to free property from the burden of debts and to encourage industry, numerous credit institutions were founded, among them the well-known Crédit Foncier. And when the Government wished to borrow money it did not address itself simply to the great bankers, but gave a chance of profit to persons having little capital, by raising the loan through public subscriptions. In 1847 the public funds were in the hands of 207,000 persons, two-thirds of whom were living in Paris. In 1854 the number of holders of these funds had increased to 664,000, more than half of whom were living in the Departments. This diffusion among the people of the securities of the State was evidence not only of increasing general prosperity, but of public confidence in the stability of the Government.

In 1860 the commercial treaty with England gave to France the benefits of freer trade; and some years later similar treaties were concluded with other countries, and the commerce of the Empire increased largely.

As the colonies were included in the provisions of these treaties, and the markets of the world were thus opened to them, they were enabled to extend their trade with foreign countries, and to share in the benefits derived by the mother country from the

Digitized by Google

liberal and enlightened commercial policy of the Imperial Government.)

Paris, especially, felt the stimulating influence of this policy. Not only was its industrial output enormously increased, but property rose in value on every side. In 1847 the manufactures of the city represented a value of but 1,500,000,000 francs; in 1869 their value was over 6,000,000,000. And while the lands within the limits of the city, together with the buildings, in 1851, was taxed on an estimated value of 2,557,000,000 francs, in 1869 it was rated at 5,957,000,000 francs.

In 1851 the revenues of the city amounted to 52,000,000 francs, and already in 1867 they had been increased to 151,000,000 francs.

The improvements affecting trade in general under the Empire were such that the exports and imports, which represented, in 1848, a value of 1,645,000,000 francs, had increased in 1857 to 4,593,000,000 francs, and in 1869 to 6,228,000,000 francs. In 1850 the *per capita* wealth of the nation was estimated at about 2,500 francs; it had reached nearly double that sum in 1870. In a word, France enjoyed, during a period of eighteen years, unbounded and unbroken industrial prosperity.[1]

Just as the Empress paid especial attention to the

[1] By one of those chances of dramatic injustice only too common in the world of affairs, by which one man reaps where another man has sown, the credit which justly attaches to this great increase in the national wealth has been given not to Napoleon III., but to M. Thiers, to whose financial ability is attributed the extraordinary facility and rapidity with which the enormous war ransom demanded by Prince Bismarck was paid off by the French Republic.

Digitized by Google

needs of the poor and the sick, so the Emperor devoted much time to the consideration of ways and means for ameliorating the situation of the working classes.

The sanitary conditions obtaining in the houses and lodgings of the great majority of labourers and artisans seemed to him to be exceedingly defective. He accordingly caused numerous model lodging-houses, as well as model dwellings for single families, to be constructed, and finally introduced into France the English Building Society system. In the year 1859 he contributed 100,000 francs towards the improvement of houses for workmen in Lille; and similar gifts were made for the same purpose to the municipalities of Amiens, Bayonne, and other cities. In the year 1864 the sum of 1,500,000 francs was expended by the Emperor in building 180 workmen's houses; and in 1867–68 he built 42 model houses for working people at Daumesnil.

Sanitary science, we may unhesitatingly say, was, previous to 1852, scarcely known in France outside of Paris; and nearly all the improvements which have since been made in the sanitary condition of French cities were begun not only under the reign, but at the instance and direction, of Napoleon III. His Government voted, in 1852, the sum of 10,000,000 francs for the purpose of improving the public health of manufacturing towns; and the Emperor seldom visited any of the cities of France without making inquiries with respect to the water supply, drainage, overcrowding, and all those matters that concern the health of the inhabitants of cities, or without impressing upon the

Digitized by Google

municipal authorities the importance, and the necessity even, of having in the construction and the administration of public works a strict regard for the requirements of sanitary science.

But it was not the inhabitants of cities only whose fortunes were improved, whose opportunities were enlarged, and who were benefited in many ways by the care of the French monarch. He paid great attention to agriculture and its improvement, and was always deeply interested in all public measures the object of which was to advance the interests of the tillers of the soil. In the year 1852 he established in every arrondissement agricultural associations; he also encouraged agricultural exhibitions by rich donations. On the 10th of June, 1854, he introduced a law for facilitating the drainage of marshes, and a credit of 100,000,000 francs was opened, from which farmers and land-owners could borrow capital to drain their lands, with the privilege of repaying their loans in instalments extending over a period of twenty-five years.

Model farms were erected in many parts of the French Empire; and vast tracts of country which, previously covered with sand-dunes, had been entirely barren, and moors and fens uninhabited on account of malaria were transformed into productive forests, healthy territories, rich corn-fields, and beautiful gardens.

The endeavours of Napoleon III. to improve the condition of the poor and to help them in their misfortunes were once known all over France; at present, however, the world seems to have forgotten them.

Digitized by Google

The time he gave to the study of questions concerning the welfare of the masses of the people, and more particularly of the industrial classes, is truly remarkable. It was a subject that was never out of his mind. A paper on the means of relieving the situation of aged and necessitous working men, without having recourse to public charity, written in his own hand, was found at the Tuileries, bearing the date of July 5, 1870. And six years before—in 1864—he gave instructions that the Opera House which was being erected in Paris should not be finished until the Hôtel Dieu, the great central hospital of the city, had been built and its wards opened to the public. The Emperor felt that human life was worth more to the State than the most splendid products of art, and that it was the duty of a sovereign to satisfy the wants and assuage the sufferings of his people before providing for their pleasures and amusements. "Admitting," he says, "that this arrangement has no practical advantage, from a moral point of view I hold it important that the edifice to be devoted to pleasure shall not be raised before the shelter for suffering."

At the time of the disastrous floods that ravaged the valleys of the Loire and the Rhône, invading Orleans, Blois, Tours, Lyons, Arles, Orange, Avignon, and scores of other cities, sweeping away houses, turning the streets into canals, covering the country for miles around with great lakes—a catastrophe involving not only the loss of many lives but the destruction of a vast amount of property—the Emperor came to the relief of his unfortunate people

Digitized by Google

promptly and most generously. Six hundred thousand francs from his own private purse he gave them at once to meet the most pressing individual needs. And this sum was greatly increased by the gifts made in the name of the Empress and the Prince Imperial. Subsequently 2,000,000 francs were granted by the Chambers to assist the sufferers from those inundations.

But the interest of the Emperor in this great calamity was not limited to a benevolent desire to supply the immediate wants of those who had lost everything they possessed. He wished to see for himself just what had taken place, how it had happened, and what could be done to prevent a repetition of the disaster. With this object in view, he visited personally the departments that were the scene of the calamity, wading in the water or being rowed in a boat for miles across the inundated fields. Then he directed that a detailed report of the damage caused by the floods should be prepared, together with plans for the construction of the works necessary to keep the waters of the two rivers between their banks. The letter he wrote from Plombières shortly after, in July, 1856, to his Minister of Public Works, is no less remarkable on account of the extraordinary knowledge it shows the Emperor possessed of the technical details of hydraulic engineering, than for the earnestness with which he urges the minister to set about this particular work at once, on the spot, and not suffer it to end in talk and "luminous reports."

And if now, for more than forty years, no similar

Digitized by Google

disasters have occurred in the valleys of the Loire and the Rhône, it is not because the rains have become less torrential there, but because, in accordance with the wishes, and, I might almost say, under the personal direction of the Emperor, provisions were made and works were constructed at the danger points which have proved sufficient to prevent any considerable overflow of the waters of these rivers.

The Exposition of 1867 was a brilliant, if transient, representation of the work accomplished in France since 1855, in nearly every field of human interest and activity, in the sciences, the arts, in morals, in politics, and in charity. All the nations of the world were invited to participate in this great festival, and by their presence to crown the efforts of labour with the idea of conciliation and peace. Its success was immense and well deserved. The international exhibitions of later years have been "bigger," but not one of them has been so admirably organised, so proportionate in its several parts, so perfectly fitted to facilitate those comparative studies of the materials, conditions, methods, and products exhibited, which increase the sum of useful knowledge and extend the benefits of civilisation to distant communities. Nor has any similar international assembly ever contributed more effectively to establish a feeling of respect for each other, and relations of concord and amity among the rulers of the world. This was the supreme purpose of the Exposition of 1867. It was an impressive manifestation of the Imperial will that the sword was to be no longer the instrument upon which France relied for the maintenance of her prestige and influence among the nations. On the

Digitized by Google

occasion of the distribution of awards on the 1st of July—one of the most magnificent ceremonies which it was ever my privilege to witness—the Emperor closed his address with these words:

"May those who have lived a little while among us carry back with them a just opinion of our country; let them be persuaded that we entertain sentiments of esteem and sympathy for foreign nations, and that we sincerely desire to live in peace with them. This Exposition will mark, I hope, a new era of harmony and progress. Convinced, as I am, that Providence blesses the efforts of all those who wish to do well, as we do, I believe in the definitive triumph of the great principles of morality and justice, which, satisfying all legitimate aspirations, are able alone to consolidate thrones, lift up the people, and ennoble humanity."

It has often been said that the Exposition of 1867 marked the apogee of the Imperial power. All eyes were then turned towards France; never had such a concourse of distinguished visitors, princes, kings, and emperors assembled in the capital of a foreign State to pay homage to its sovereigns. But it marked also, in an extraordinary manner, the progress that had been made by the people under the Empire, materially and socially; for never before had the industrial forces and artistic genius of France been exhibited with such splendour and effect.

But some one may ask: While all these things may have been done by the Emperor, has not the whole period of the Empire often been characterised by contemporary writers as one pre-eminently devoted to the cultivation of material interests, to inordinate specula-

Digitized by Google

tion, luxury, and immorality? It certainly has been. And the bill of indictment reads as follows: "The commercial and industrial activity of this epoch, and the over-stimulation which it gives to all the material appetites, have resulted in a frightful competition, the most shocking forms of stock-jobbing, and a love of dollars more impudent and brazen-faced than under the Regency or the Directory. To get money without work, by the shortest cuts, to invent ways of speculating on the credulity of the public, to find dupes—in a word, to transact business—is the sole thought and occupation of the most influential part of the population, of a society brilliant and corrupt, as destitute of belief as of feeling, and that knows only material pleasures and the enjoyments of luxury."

This is the dreadful picture which has been drawn of the decadence and moral corruption that existed under the Empire. No, I am mistaken. These words were used in describing the state of things under the government of Louis Philippe and his austere minister, M. Guizot.[1] And they have been used, or words quite like them have been used, and can be found in every account of the life of a great people since history began to be written. Moreover, they will continue to be used by political moralists so long as civilised society exists; for the more splendid its fruits, the more renowned the victories of peace, so the more conspicuous are likely to be some of their undesirable products and accompaniments. In short, as certain social conditions seem to be inevitable, when the rewards of labour are abundant and wealth accumulates,

[1] Lavalles, "Histoire de Paris," tome i. p. 312.

Digitized by Google

it follows that some of the most serious charges directed against the domestic policy and the morality of the Imperial Government are in reality only a way of saying what I have endeavoured to briefly set forth in the preceding pages—that, under the rule of Napoleon III., the French people enjoyed unusual material prosperity.

But the greatest work of Napoleon III. was in the field of international politics, and was performed for the honour, the glory, and the greater empire of France. This was the destruction of the European coalition that had held, or tried to hold, France in subjection since the overthrow of the First Empire. It was his wisdom in entering into an alliance with England, the prestige gained by the war in the Crimea, strengthened and completed by his successful intervention, in 1859, in behalf of the kingdom of Italy, that restored to France her hegemony on the Continent of Europe. This leadership was lost as one of the consequences of the unfortunate war of 1870–71. But the credit that rightfully belongs to Napoleon III. of having won for France the position of political pre-eminence which it held during his reign among the great Powers, should not be either cynically or complacently ignored by those who have most keenly felt and bitterly bemoaned the loss of this leadership.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR OF 1870–71

A visit to Saint Cloud—The candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern—The Duke de Gramont—The Emperor not inclined to war—The opinion of the Empress—The Emperor's bad counsellors—General Lebœuf—An incident—Public feeling—I propose to establish an ambulance—The service is subsequently rendered—The declaration of war—Enthusiasm of the people—The excitement in Paris—The anxiety of the Emperor—He felt that France was not prepared for the war—His interest in the army—The condition *sine quâ non*—Words not to be forgotten—The departure of the troops—The Empress is appointed Regent—The Emperor leaves Saint Cloud for Metz—Misgivings.

IN July, 1870, I invited a large number of Americans, together with a few French friends, to a garden-party at my house in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, in order to celebrate with them the anniversary of the establishment of our Government; and we spent the long afternoon of that splendid summer day confraternally, and in grateful remembrance of the virtues of our forefathers.

Although some of us had been living abroad for many years, it was evident that not one of our number had forgotten how much he owed to his native land; that if national prejudices had disappeared, the love of home and the patriotism of all had not dimin-

Digitized by Google

ished. Indeed, many — too many — of my fellow-countrymen have yet to learn that the flag of our Union is never so beautiful or so glorious as when raised on foreign soil, and that no eyes are so quickly moistened, no hearts so deeply moved by the music of our national airs and melodies, as are those of "expatriated" Americans.

The Emperor, who was one of the most observant men of his time, not only fully appreciated the value and significance of our American institutions, but, as I have already had occasion to remark, took a great interest in all matters that related in any way to the United States. Having seen his Majesty a few days previous to the above-mentioned gathering, I told him of my intention to celebrate the 4th of July by inviting to my house those of my countrymen who were residing in or visiting Paris; and he then expressed a wish to learn, after the fête was over, how it went off. I was so greatly pleased, and, indeed, so proud of the extraordinary success of my garden-party, that, mindful of his Majesty's request, I decided to go, on the morning of the 5th, to Saint Cloud, where the Imperial family then resided.

It was between six and seven o'clock when I left my house, but, although the hour was rather unusual for such a visit, I knew the Emperor would be up, for he was an early riser; and, besides, my duties obliged me to return to Paris before a certain hour.

When I arrived at the palace I looked up at the balcony on which the windows of the Emperor's dressing-room opened, for I expected that I should find the French monarch standing there, as he had

Digitized by Google

the habit of doing, smoking his cigarette and enjoying the morning air. But there was no one upon the balcony, and I was surprised to see the windows of the suite of rooms which the Emperor occupied standing wide open—a sure sign that he was not present in that part of the palace, and that he had left his chambers unusually early.

Hastening upstairs, I met M. Goutellard, his Majesty's *valet de chambre*, the expression of whose features confirmed my apprehension that something extraordinary had taken place. On inquiring, I was informed by him that the Emperor had been aroused from his sleep long before daylight by despatches which had been sent to him from the Foreign Office, and which seemed to have made upon his Majesty a very great impression.

While I was still wondering what could possibly have occurred, the Emperor himself appeared. He saluted me cordially, although his manner betrayed dissatisfaction and annoyance. Seeing my surprise, he directed my attention to the papers which he held in his hand, and told me in a few words their contents. These despatches related to the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern for the throne of Spain, which had been announced by the Press the day before.

The Duke de Gramont, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, from whom the communications had come, had reported the information received by him in a way that made it seem of very great and probably undue importance, as I judged from the Emperor's extreme gravity of demeanour, which

Digitized by Google

struck me forcibly and left upon my mind a painful impression. I could not help recalling at the time the remark made to me by a statesman of European reputation, on the announcement of the appointment of the Duke de Gramont to the office of Minister for Foreign Affairs: "Believe me, the appointment forbodes a Franco-German war."

This remark was based upon a correct estimate of the character of the man. But, unfortunately, the Emperor placed great confidence in the Duke; and I could easily see, from the conversation which ensued on that eventful morning, that although in the judgment of his Majesty a war with Prussia should be avoided, if possible, the influence of this minister, and of others, was so strong that these rash and ill-advised despatches had their full and intended effect. The Emperor was persuaded that France had really been insulted, although at the moment there was perhaps no sufficient reason for such an interpretation of the Hohenzollern candidature.

The Emperor, while I was still present at the palace, gave orders that a telegram should be sent to Paris, summoning the Duke de Gramont to Saint Cloud; and notwithstanding the early hour, he hastened to the rooms of the Empress to inform her of the communications to which he attributed such great importance. Everything indicated the approach of a crisis; and I left Saint Cloud with many misgivings, because I greatly feared that the bad advisers of the French monarch would lead him to commit mistakes which might have the most serious consequences.

Digitized by Google

On the same day the Duke de Gramont had, as I heard from good authority, a long conversation with his sovereign, and I felt sure the Duke had used this opportunity to disturb the mind of the Emperor —to insist upon the gravity of the incident, and the necessity of meeting it by a peremptory declaration on the part of the Imperial Government. The result proved that I was not mistaken.

On the evening of this day (July 5th) Prince de Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador, having gone to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was addressed by the Duke de Gramont as follows:

"I am very glad to see you. I have just come from Saint Cloud, and from a very excited meeting of the Council. You know what has happened?" "I suppose," said the Prince, "you refer to the Prussian candidature." "Ah," replied the Duke, "it is a great affair;" and he added with firmness, and at the same time with emotion: "That will never be; we shall oppose it by every means, even were a war with Prussia the result."[1]

When the news of the candidature of Leopold, Prince of Hohenzollern, first became known to the French people, few of them considered it to be of any great importance, because almost everybody believed that a diplomatic note to the Government of Spain would be sufficient to induce Marshal Prim to withdraw his offer of the throne to a relative of the Prussian King. Such a solution of the question would have been the most natural.

[1] Despatch of Prince de Metternich to Count de Beust, July 8, 1870.

Digitized by Google

The journals that had been devoted to the Empire from its foundation, saw no reason for taking offence at an act concerning the propriety of which the Spanish people, in fact, were the sole judges. But the Duke de Gramont, with others, took the matter "*au tragique*," and in the Legislative Assembly and through the Press he strove to persuade the world that the candidature of a Prussian prince was an insult to France, and that the Government of the King of Prussia should be called upon to disown this nomination, and to order the prince to withdraw his unauthorised acceptance of it, otherwise war would be unavoidable.

The Cabinet of the Emperor, in view of the difficult situation that had been suddenly created, became immediately divided. The Duke de Gramont, General Lebœuf, Rigault de Genouilly, and Maurice Richard showed an inclination to make this candidature a *casus belli*; on the other side, Chevandier de Valdrome, Louvet, Segris, and Plichon threatened to lay down their portfolios in case war should be declared; while Ollivier, de Parien, and Mège wished to temporise.

The Emperor, personally, was not at all inclined to precipitate a war with Germany. Not but that he recognised the serious character of the situation which had been created—that it would be impossible for his Government to permit Prince Leopold to accept the offer made by Marshal Prim. But he saw no necessity for making a *casus belli* of an incident which, in his opinion, could be and ought to be disposed of by intelligent diplomacy. "If

Digitized by Google

we can only get this candidature out of the way," said he, "*no matter how it is done*, there will be no war." And it was with this object in view that, without consulting his ministers, the Emperor requested the King of Belgium to use his personal influence at Sigmaringen to obtain a withdrawal of Prince Leopold's candidature, and thus close the incident and preserve the peace of Europe. When, on the 12th of July, the Emperor heard that Prince Antoine had telegraphed to Marshal Prim announcing the withdrawal in his name of his son's acceptance of the Spanish crown, he sent immediately for Signor Nigra to come to the Tuileries. Greeting the Italian Ambassador most cordially on his arrival, the Emperor told him the news, and said: "This despatch of Prince Antoine means peace. I have requested you to come here for the purpose of having you telegraph the news to your Government. I have not had time to write to the King. I know very well that public opinion is so excited that it would have preferred war. But this renunciation is a satisfactory solution, and disposes, at least for the present, of every pretext for hostilities."

The same day he said to General Bourbaki, with evident delight, "It will not be necessary for you to get ready your war-gear, for every cause of conflict is now removed."

And meeting a number of officers shortly afterward, he said before them all: "This news is a great relief to me. I am very glad that everything has ended in this way. War is always a big venture."

Digitized by Google

At one of the very last Cabinet Councils, while Marshal Lebœuf continued to assert that "we are now ready," and that, "if we do not strike immediately, we shall lose an opportunity which we shall never have again," the Emperor proposed that the whole subject of the controversy should be submitted to arbitration. And this proposition was accepted—but too late.

Lebœuf had issued his orders for mobilising the army; and the falsified despatch published that very day in the *North German Gazette*, by the direction of Count Bismarck, produced its intended effect—in the picturesque language of its author, "the effect of a red flag on the French bull." In a word, peace was no longer possible.[1] Ever since 1866 the Emperor had known only too well the completeness of the German military organisation, and the feeling of hostility towards everything French that prevailed at Berlin. General Ducrot, who was in command at Strasbourg, had kept him well informed upon these subjects in letters addressed to him personally. He had read the comprehensive and precise reports of Colonel Stoffel, the very able French military attaché at the Prussian Court. He had listened to what some of the cleverest observers and interpreters of German opinion had to say on these subjects. But even he had been nearly all the while optimistic; for he believed the destiny of France and his own destiny to be in his own keeping.

When the Countess de Pourtalès, who had been

[1] See Appendix V.

Digitized by Google

visiting relatives in Prussia not long before the war, said to him, "If you only knew what is said there, and could only see what is being done on every side to be ready for a war that is imminent!" the Emperor, smiling at what he evidently regarded as an exaggerated portrayal of the actual facts, replied: "Through what clouds have those fine eyes been looking at the future? You forget, my dear Countess, that to have a war requires the consent of two. And I don't wish it!" This was the Emperor's greatest mistake. In July, 1870, his consent was not necessary. The people were then sovereign. When he discovered this, the gravity of the situation began to bear down upon him.

In his reply to M. Schneider, who, immediately after the declaration of war, addressed him on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, and assured his Majesty that he would have the patriotic co-operation of this body, the Emperor said: "The real author of this war is not the one who has declared it, but he who has made it necessary. I have done all that I could to prevent it; but the whole nation by an irresistible impulse has dictated my resolution." And it should not fail to be observed that he justified himself in yielding to this dictation by affirming that the object he hoped to gain was not glory nor national aggrandisement, but the realisation of those humanitarian sentiments and ideals which formed the bed-rock of his whole political philosophy—the peace of the world and a general disarmament. "We seek," said he, "a durable peace, and to put a stop to that precarious state in which all the nations are squandering their

Digitized by Google

resources in arming themselves one against the other." [1]

Having frequent occasion to see the Emperor between the 5th and 15th of July, I became convinced that he listened only reluctantly to those who tried to prove to him that a Franco-German conflict had become unavoidable; and I am certain that when he at last yielded, and gave his consent that the Legislative Body should be called upon to "take immediately the necessary measures for the protection of the interests, the security, and the honour of France," it was not done heedlessly, but with a full sense of his own responsibilities, and with a clear understanding of the possible consequences of a war with Germany. He was perfectly aware that he and King William would not engage in a war on equal terms; that the King might lose many battles and keep his crown; but that for him defeat would be destruction.

The Empress Eugénie also had more than once expressed, in my presence, her opinion that a war with Germany was not by any means desirable; and although the enemies of the Napoleonic dynasty have

[1] "Nous ne faisons pas la guerre à l'Allemagne, dont nous respectons l'indépendance. Nous faisons des vœux pour que les peuples qui composent la grand nationalité germanique disposent librement de leur destinées.

Quant à nous, nous réclamons l'établissement d'un état de choses qui garantisse notre sécurité et assure l'avenir. Nous voulons conquérir une paix durable, basée sur les vrais intérêts des peuples, et faire cesser cet état précaire où toutes les nations emploient leurs ressources à s'armer les uns contre les autres."—*Proclamation de l'Empereur, Juillet* 29, 1870.

Digitized by Google

never ceased to maintain that it was the Empress who was the most insistent in persuading the Emperor to enter upon that disastrous campaign, I believe that she, on the contrary, was not only disposed to do, but as a matter of fact did do, all in her power to preserve peace, so long as peace was possible.[1] What her real opinions were with respect to this war are set forth in the following note which she sent me soon after she arrived in England. It is in her own handwriting, and is now published for the first time.

[TRANSLATION]

"It is said that the war was desired and made in a dynastic interest. Common sense only is needed to prove the contrary. The Plebiscitum had given great strength to the Empire; the war could add nothing to it. Were it fortunate, it might give glory, doubtless; but if unfortunate, it might overthrow the dynasty. What man in his senses would stake the existence of his country, and his own life, on a toss-up? No; the war was neither desired nor sought by the Emperor; it was submitted to. After the reforms of the 2nd of January, parties acquired in France new

[1] The expression "*c'est ma guerre*," attributed to the Empress by Gambetta, who gave as his authority M. Le Sourd, the first secretary of the French embassy at Berlin, is a miserable fiction. M. Le Sourd has denied over his own signature that he ever heard the Empress utter these words or that he had ever repeated them. The phrase belongs to a notorious class of alleged sayings that it is almost impossible to successfully contradict, for the very obvious, if paradoxical, reason that, before they are heard of, or even exist, they are believed to be true by most of those persons who believe in them at all.

Digitized by Google

power; they urged the Government on to war by manifestations and through the Press. Since 1866 the Opposition had never ceased to say to France that she was humiliated. Then—in 1866—the personal influence of the Emperor alone was able to avoid the conflict. But in 1870 he was overridden (*débordé*), having no longer the power in his hands."

Unfortunately, at this most critical moment, when prejudice and passion were creating public opinion and determining the national will, the advisers of the Emperor were neither intelligent enough nor conscientious enough to give him such counsel as would have been of service to their country. The Minister of War, especially, Marshal Lebœuf, an impetuous and indiscreet man, was guilty of having greatly deceived not only his sovereign, but the public, and perhaps himself, in regard to the real strength and efficiency of the French army, and its chances of success in case of a contest with Prussia. He told every one who came in contact with him that the French army was in an excellent condition, and that everything was prepared for immediate action. "I am ready," he said. "Never have we been so ready; never shall we be so ready; the war, sooner or later, is inevitable. Let us accept it." An expression of his of a similar kind, namely, "Not even a gaiter-button is wanting," has become known all over Europe. Unfortunately, there were many persons who could not see how exaggerated were these assertions of the Minister, and who therefore believed in their correctness.

Digitized by Google

Marshal Lebœuf not only gave the Emperor a wrong impression as to the general efficiency of the French army, but he also made averments concerning the armies and military resources of Germany, of which he knew but little, that were entirely erroneous.

Having myself travelled, at various times previous to 1870, in different parts of Prussia, and also in Southern Germany, I had everywhere observed with surprise the large place the army held in the daily life of the people. There was no town, no village, where military exercises could not be witnessed; nor could I fail to remark the splendid physical condition of the German soldier, how perfectly he had been trained, and how admirably prepared he was to face the contingency of war. Indeed, every one who had visited Germany shortly before the war of 1870, and who was not blind to the truth of things, received the same impression as myself; and I could not refrain from communicating my views to the Emperor, during some of the conversations which I had with him.

A few days before the declaration of war, while with the Emperor in his cabinet, reference having been made to the Prussian military organisation, I ventured to remark that, in my opinion, Germany would prove to be a very formidable antagonist to meet. At the request of his Majesty, I repeated this opinion to Marshal Lebœuf, who just at this moment joined us. The Marshal listened to my words, but seemed to doubt their truth, and gave me to understand that he had quite different views with regard to Germany. I asked him if these views were based upon personal investigation; if he was acquainted with those

Digitized by Google

countries which seemed of so little importance to him, and whether he had been himself in Germany. His answer was that he had been in Germany, but that he had not seen much of it. I could not help retorting courteously, that he had possibly made his studies of Germany in Wiesbaden, Homburg, and Baden-Baden. While laughing at my remark, he acknowledged that, during his sojourns in Germany, he had generally limited his visits to the places mentioned, and to the borders of the Rhine. Of this I was persuaded in advance. Notwithstanding, however, his insufficient information with respect to the actual state of things in the enemy's country, the French Minister of War was foolhardy enough to speak to his sovereign of a march to Berlin and the conquest of Germany, with an assurance which would not admit of any possible doubt.

After having breakfasted at the Palace of Saint Cloud that morning with his Majesty, Marshal Lebœuf, and several other officials of the Empire, the Marshal and I descended the stairs together and passed out into the court, where before he entered his carriage, an incident happened which I shall never forget, as what the Minister on this occasion said was so characteristic of the hyperbolic expressions used by him when speaking of the French army.

In front of the main entrance of the palace there stood a sentry on guard, who presented arms when the Marshal approached. The latter, evidently not noticing the person of the soldier, but carried away by the sight of the uniform, laid his hand upon the shoulder of the sentry, and, with his usual military

Digitized by Google

enthusiasm, proudly exclaimed: "With such soldiers as this France is invincible!"

How ridiculous the exclamation was, and how difficult it was for me to suppress a smile, one may judge on learning that the sentry thus honoured by his general was a young fellow far below the average height, and apparently destitute of every physical quality requisite to make a good soldier.

The day, however, was not far off when the over-confident Marshal had brought home to him the full weight of his personal responsibility for the disasters that overwhelmed his ill-conditioned and insufficiently equipped army. After the war, having retired to his estate in the country, he disappeared from view only to reappear in public as a witness before a parliamentary commission; and again, for the last time, on the 12th of January, 1873, at Chislehurst, when standing before the body of his Emperor, dethroned, and now rigid in death, he fell upon his knees and, sobbing violently, cried out in a voice choked with grief, "Oh, pardon me, Sire!"

With Marshal Lebœuf as Minister of War, and with the Duke de Gramont as Minister for Foreign Affairs, the destinies of France were in the keeping of men altogether incompetent to deal with a dangerous political situation—one from which no successful issue could be found without knowledge and the exercise of wisdom and tact. This was the thought which at that moment crossed my mind; and it is my belief that, in the year 1870, this thought was shared by many unprejudiced persons.

The Duke de Gramont insisted that an excellent

Digitized by Google

opportunity had arrived to avenge France for having been deceived by Prussia after the battle of Sadowa; and the result was that, from the 5th of July until the 15th of that month, there passed no day on which some blunder was not committed by the Foreign Office. Telegram after telegram was sent to M. Benedetti, the French Ambassador at the Prussian Court, urging him, against his own good judgment, to make proposals to the Prussian King which, as could be foreseen, were not likely to be accepted. And the manner in which the Duke de Gramont, unwittingly and passionately playing into the hand of Count Bismarck, who cunningly led the game, finally succeeded in precipitating the rupture between France and Germany, is now well known.

I recognise that it is extremely easy to criticise acts in the light of subsequent events. Had the Duke de Gramont known before the declaration of war what everybody knew very soon after it, his policy would certainly not have been a bellicose one. And it is just as certain that the particular indiscretions of the Duke's policy would have been less remarked, if discovered at all, had the French met with the success they all confidently expected at the beginning of the war, or had the honours of battle been nearly equally divided between the combatants—in a word, had his Government possessed sufficient military strength to support him. He fully supposed—and he had reason to suppose—that the armies of France were not inferior to those of Prussia, or even of any probable German combination. To use his own words: "I resigned myself to the war; I made it (it was my only

Digitized by Google

mistake) with absolute confidence of victory. For twenty years I have represented my country abroad; I believed in its greatness, in its strength, and in its military virtues, with almost as much confidence as I believe in my holy religion. What did I find on coming to Paris? A confidence equal to my own. The men who were the most competent in the Senate and in the Legislative Assembly believed, all of them, that France was invincible. And if a few solitary voices formulated a doubt or a fear, they failed to do it in season. I do not intend to say by these words that it was a blind confidence in victory that inspired at the last hour the resolution of the Government. No, the war was inevitable; it was declared at Berlin, and in the Prussian determination there entered as its principal element an exact knowledge of the military forces of France and of the military forces of Germany."[1] The confidence of the Duke in the "invincibility" of France was but the natural consequence of the representations and assurances of Marshals Niel and Lebœuf, made without an exact knowledge of the military forces of either France or Germany.

It is but just, moreover, to remember the excited state of public feeling in France at this time, that it had a powerful influence on the Government, and that the action of the Duke was taken in compliance with the demands of the representatives of the people, and expressed the sovereign will of the nation.

Singular as it may seem, the Radical journals from

[1] "Enquête Parlementaire," tome i. p. 108.

Digitized by Google

the very beginning exceeded, if possible, in the violence of their language, those attached to the Government.

The *Temps* said: "Should a Prussian prince be placed upon the throne of Spain, we should be thrown back to the times not of Henry IV., but of Francis I."

The *Siècle* declared that "France, surrounded on every side by Prussia, or States subject to its influence, would be reduced to that isolated situation which led our ancient monarchy to those long wars with the House of Austria. The situation would be much worse than immediately after the treaties of 1815."

François Victor Hugo cried out in the *Rappel:* "The Hohenzollerns have reached such audacity that they aspire to dominate Europe. It will be for our time an eternal humiliation that this project has been, we will not say undertaken, but only conceived."

And such things were said before the candidature of Prince Leopold had been officially announced by the Government.

Stirred by these explosive manifestations of popular feeling, pushed on by the wild clamour that arose on every side, the Government, on the 6th of July, declared before the Chamber its intention to oppose the placing of the Spanish crown on the head of a Hohenzollern prince. This announcement of the Government's policy was unanimously approved by the Press.

Perhaps the best evidence of the extraordinary state of exasperation and passion into which Frenchmen managed in the course of a few days to mutually and

Digitized by Google

foolishly excite themselves, is to be found in the effect on the people of the announcement made by M. Ollivier, on the 12th of July, that Prince Antoine of Hohenzollern had, on account of the opposition to the candidature of his son, withdrawn the acceptance given. Foreshadowing, as this act did, a pacific solution of a most difficult and dangerous question, one might presume that it would have been welcomed by the whole nation with intense satisfaction. On the contrary, it was received by the people with jeers, and among the crowds assembled in front of the cafés along the line of the boulevards, "*La dépêche du père Antoine*" was repeated from one to another as the joke of the day, or only to provoke a fresh explosion of rage.

A Government journal having affirmed that "it is all we ask; it is a great victory, which has not cost a tear, not a drop of blood," the *Presse* answered: "This victory will be for us the worst of humiliations and the last of perils." And the *Opinion Nationale* wrote: "Since yesterday, all the journals friendly to the Government are eagerly repeating that peace has been made, that the quarrel has come to an end, and that we ought to rejoice. Nevertheless, no one is happy; we are sad, disappointed, and anxious."

The *Soir* said: "Were war declared to-day, the applause would shake the National Assembly. If war is not declared, it will be something more than a deception—it will be an immense burst of laughter, and the Cabinet will be drowned in its own silence."

The *Gaulois* wrote: "A great nation is stupefied. Hearts are bursting; the masses, ten times more in-

Digitized by Google

telligent than our rulers, know that this 'pacific victory' will cost France more blood than pitched battles."

The *National* said: "It is a peace of ill-omen, the peace that has been talked about for the last twenty-four hours."

And M. Émile de Girardin shouted out, in the midst of the general uproar: "If the Prussians refuse to fight we will force them to cross the Rhine, and to clear out from the left bank, by clubbing their backs with the butts of our muskets."

When, finally, on the 15th of July, the Legislative Assembly was asked by the Government whether it should be war or peace, out of 257 votes, 247 were for war and but ten for peace. And this result, on being announced, was followed by indescribable manifestations of enthusiasm.

Nothing could more clearly indicate the general infatuation with respect to the issue of a war between France and Germany than that the very opponents of the Government in the Legislative chamber expected nothing less than the final triumph of the French arms. Indeed, it was to prevent this, and what seemed to them its inevitable consequence—the consolidation of the Empire—that they refused to be convinced that there was a *casus belli;* but after having thrown all the responsibility for the situation upon the Government, with few exceptions they voted with the majority for war; for they, too, were unable to withstand the passionate appeals that came from the Press and the people.

So deep was the feeling of indignation at the

Digitized by Google

conduct of the Cabinet of Berlin, so universal the demand for vengeance, that Lord Lyons, in a despatch to Lord Granville, said:

"It is doubtful if the Government would have been able to resist the cry raised for the war, even had it been able to announce a decided diplomatic success."

The statement made in the French Legislative Chamber by the Duke de Gramont, on the 15th of July, 1870, was virtually a declaration of war; it then became evident to the world that hostilities between France and Germany had become unavoidable.

Those who were personally interested in the success of either the one or the other nation thought, of course, of little else but the desired victory; but those who, being neither Germans nor Frenchmen, were uninfluenced by patriotic sentiment, or national prepossessions and prejudices, at once foresaw the great sacrifice of life and the fearful suffering which a war would cause both to the victor and the vanquished, and recognised how deplorable, from a humane point of view, this conflict must be. Happily there were not a few among them who felt it to be a duty to endeavour to mitigate its sad and painful consequences.

It was for this reason that I determined to render assistance, in every way in my power, to the sufferers of both armies, although my heart leaned naturally towards the French; for France had been my home for many years.

I desired also to avail myself of the opportunity

Digitized by Google

which a war would offer of introducing the improved methods of transporting and treating the wounded and taking care of the sick which had been adopted in my own country during the great war of 1861–65, and which I had been labouring for many years to bring to the knowledge of the friends of army medical reform throughout the world.

In the year 1867, during the Exposition Universelle in Paris, I exhibited a number of ambulance waggons, and models of field and post hospitals, together with a collection of the excellent hospital and sanitary appliances which, after careful trial, had been adopted in the United States Army, or been used or approved by the United States Sanitary Commission. To this exhibit was awarded one of the eight grand prizes given at that exhibition. It was the only "Grand Prix" obtained by an American. Indeed, I found that my endeavours to make this apparatus known to European surgeons and army officials, as well as to introduce in camps the new methods used for the hospitalisation and treatment of the sick and wounded, were greatly appreciated in military circles. At that time, however, no one imagined how soon there would be an opportunity in Europe to make a practical test of the value of these new appliances and methods.

The Emperor, after a visit to this exhibit, which interested him greatly, said to me that he hoped the day was very far off when they should have occasion in France to make use of these interesting inventions.

Not only had the time now suddenly arrived for organising assistance in behalf of the victims of war, but there were serious reasons for believing that it

Digitized by Google

would be found necessary, very soon, to provide accommodation for the treatment of the wounded in the capital itself of the French Empire.

I proposed, therefore, to establish an ambulance in Paris, where the wounded could be treated, so far as possible, under conditions similar to those which had been attended with the best results in the United States—in short, to give a practical demonstration of the great advantages to be secured by making extensive use of field-hospitals "under canvas," instead of crowding the wounded into churches and public and private buildings, as has been the custom in all armies and in all times.

The apparatus which I had shown during the Exposition, and which I still had in my possession, formed a good basis for the establishment of such an ambulance; but as there was much wanting to complete it, I undertook to procure more tents and additional medical and surgical supplies from the United States.

On the 18th of July a meeting of Americans was held at my office, for the purpose of considering what we, representing the Paris American colony, and also to a certain extent our countrymen at home, ought to do in view of the approaching conflict and its impending and fearful consequences. About twenty-five persons were present.

At this meeting I stated that while, by contributions of money, we might furnish the means of relieving much suffering, and at the same time give expression to our feelings of humanity and international sympathy, it seemed to me that the most effective way in

Digitized by Google

which we could use our money and give our assistance, under the existing circumstances, would be by establishing, in connection with the French and German armies, working examples of the American system of taking care of sick and wounded soldiers; and I insisted that such an addition to the sanitary knowledge of Europe would be far more valuable than any mere donation of material aid to either French or German ambulances, though it were possible to collect thousands of dollars for that purpose.

All of the gentlemen present at that meeting agreed with me, and promised me their co-operation in establishing one or more field-hospitals with the necessary accessories, to be constructed and managed in accordance with those principles which had received the sanction of American experience as being most suitable in war. A committee was thereupon appointed, under my presidency, with full power to carry on the work of "relieving the wants and sufferings of soldiers during the war which is now anticipated between France and Prussia."

I may remark, *en passant*, that such an ambulance was subsequently established in Paris, and that a large number of wounded were there taken care of during the siege, in the winter of 1870–71, in a way that realised in every respect my intentions and my hopes. It attracted the attention not only of the surgeons connected with the *Service de Santé* and the military hospitals, but of the principal officers of the army and the members of the Government. The surgical results reported by those in charge of this ambulance were surprising. The Press was filled with com-

Digitized by Google

mendatory notices concerning its organisation and management. Other ambulances were opened in Paris by the French *Société de Secours aux Blessés*, in which the same system and the same appliances were closely copied. And the Government of the *Défense Nationale*, at the end of the siege, as an expression of its appreciation of the services rendered by this model American field-hospital, conferred the decoration of the Legion of Honour on no less than *seventeen* Americans, members of the staff employed in the general direction of the establishment, or in the service of its several departments, and raised me to the rank of Commander in the same order.[1]

While preparations were being made for the execution of my plan for ameliorating the condition of the sick and wounded during the impending war, the political events became from day to day more important and more exciting.

The Declaration of War created the greatest enthusiasm all over France, and the Press was nearly unanimous in applauding the resolution taken by the Government and by the Legislative Assembly. Even the most Radical journals proclaimed their approbation of the decision of the Ministry. Some extracts from the papers of the Opposition will be sufficient to prove this assertion.

The *Univers* said: "The war in which we are about to engage is, on the part of France, neither the work of a party nor an adventure imposed by the

[1] "History of the American Ambulance," by Thomas W. Evans. London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1873.

Digitized by Google

sovereign. The nation undertakes it willingly. It is not the Emperor Napoleon III. who of his own accord has declared this war. It is we who have forced his hand."

The *Liberté* said: "For several days we have not ceased to call for war. We have asked for it in all our prayers. The future, and the near future, will tell whether we have been right or wrong. Our soul and our conscience tell us that, in acting thus and in demanding war, we have obeyed the duty which, outside of all other considerations, the dignity and the honour of France impose upon us."

The *Monde* wrote: "The Chamber was stupefied when it saw some of its members—let us hasten to say a feeble minority, however—protest by their votes against the war, the most just, the most necessary, and the most opportune. . . . The Keeper of the Seals expressed the sentiment of France when he showed astonishment on account of the long debates on a question which is so clear, and when he called upon the Chamber to pass from words to acts. Yes, this mourning which has already commenced, these tears which are already shed, all this has become a necessary and unavoidable evil. . . . The Government of the Emperor recognised this political truth when it yielded nobly, admirably, to the inmost desire of France. If the enemy is ready before we are, then the useless and scandalous discussions heard last Friday in the Palais Bourbon have been the cause of its being in advance."

The *Opinion Nationale* said: "And we Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, citizens of an ideal

Digitized by Google

fatherland, let us return to our real fatherland, and let us sustain it in its struggle, without troubling ourselves about the persons and things that divide us. A truce at this moment to all intestine disputes!"

The *Presse* had under the heading, "The National War," an article which contained the following words: "The cries of war, which resounded yesterday on our boulevards, will now fill France, and sustain our army in the heroic struggle to which the insolence of Prussia provokes us. The resolutions of war which we are about to take do not emanate from the Government. The Government has been irresolute; it allowed itself, by some of its chiefs, at least, to be drawn into making absurd concessions. These resolves go out from the very soul, so to speak, of the country itself. They are the result of all the irritation of national sentiment against the system of slavery which threatened to weigh down Europe," &c.

Perfectly in accordance with the conclusions and the language of the Paris Press was the feeling of the majority of the nation at that time. "It is now," said M. Émile Ollivier, on receiving Bismarck's falsified despatch, "beyond the power of man to avert this war." The question at issue from that moment ceased to be a diplomatic affair, or a matter that concerned only the Imperial Government. The two nations, Prussia and France, had been thrown in collision, and were immediately in flames. A war of races was now inevitable. When M. Gambetta, on the morning after the publication of this famous despatch, said, in the Chamber of Deputies, "The purpose of this war is to settle for ever between the French and Germanic races

Digitized by Google

the question of *preponderance*," his words only expressed what every Frenchman then felt. To the challenge, "*Qui vive?*" the answer came in a voice of thunder, "*La France!*" The French capital was seized with irrepressible enthusiasm and wild excitement. Every night, for more than a week, after the resolution of the Government became known, the boulevards were filled by the populace, whose numbers were so great as to make it impossible for carriages to proceed along the roadway. All the people of Paris seemed to be possessed with a species of contagious hysterical insanity. The spectacle presented by these nocturnal demonstrations was most extraordinary. The foreign visitors in Paris looked on from the windows of their hotels, or other stations of vantage, with wonder and astonishment. They were manifestations not so much of patriotic feeling, as of rage and an irrepressible desire for vengeance. The dominant cry, the one that rose above and drowned all others, was "*À bas la Prusse!*"

But while the populace gathered by night in the streets, marching in columns a thousand strong, and crying "*À bas la Prusse!*" "*À Berlin!*" other crowds of people assembled during the day before the windows of the money-changers, in order to read the last quotations. The Bourse, and the square in which it stands, could not hold the enormous number of persons who wished to ascertain as quickly as possible the value of stocks and bonds; from the Rue Vivienne as far as the Boulevard des Capucines, the streets presented that peculiar spectacle, a swaying, surging mass of gesticulating, vociferating humanity, which in times

Digitized by Google

of peace was only to be seen on the floor, or in the purlieus of the Stock Exchange. Nor was the depreciation in value limited to French securities. Stocks and bonds of nearly every description were affected. British consols and United States bonds fell off almost as many points as French *rentes*. The incalculable consequences of the conflict that was imminent between the two greatest Powers on the Continent of Europe unsettled prices everywhere, and disturbed profoundly the money-markets of the world.

Everywhere were loud voices, wild exclamations, and dense crowds. The omnibuses could not pursue their usual route along the boulevards, but had to take parallel streets, and even there they could proceed only with difficulty.

The Prefect of Police, after the declaration of war, authorised the singing of the "Marseillaise," at the café-concerts, and liberal use was made of this permission.

Even those places where, in times of peace, great ceremony was observed, and where a breach of etiquette would have been regarded as intolerable, became, from the 15th of July, scenes of the most extraordinary manifestations of patriotic feeling.

At the Grand Opera one evening, after the "Marseillaise" had been wildly applauded, some persons gave expression to their desire to hear Alfred de Musset's long-forgotten "Rhin Allemand."

This desire was seconded at once by the whole audience present in the theatre, and loud calls for the "Rhin Allemand" were heard on every side. The *Régisseur* appeared on the stage and announced that

Digitized by Google

none of the opera-singers knew the words. This, however, did not satisfy the excited crowd; and in order to quiet the tumult, which had become unbearable, M. Faure finally agreed to sing the "Rhin Allemand" from the notes. After that evening, this song, as well as the "Marseillaise," was sung every night at the Opera until the threatening prospect of a siege put an end to the amusement.

Not only the capital, but every city, every village, of France, was seized with military enthusiasm; and there were but few Frenchmen that were not carried away by the popular excitement. Among these was the Emperor.

"Napoleon III.," says a contemporary writer, "had no part in the general intoxication; his enthusiasm was that of a soul inspired by great subjects. He did not know that enthusiasm of the imagination which darkens reason and gives birth to illusions."

The Emperor's heart was full of anxiety, because he had seriously studied the chances of the war. He foresaw the possible consequences to himself, his dynasty, and his country; but he believed in his destiny and had confidence in his army. And if he was mistaken with respect to its ability to promptly and successfully execute the plan of campaign that had been agreed upon, it was largely on account of the incorrect information which he received from his ministers. No monarch, no head of any great institution, can make sure of everything by immediate personal investigation; he must study carefully the reports of those whom he has charged with the ex-

Digitized by Google

amination of the details of his affairs, and do his best to learn their opinion. Napoleon III. did this, and even more.

The Emperor seldom relied exclusively upon the opinion of his ministers, but made himself well acquainted even with many of the details of the administration, and especially with those concerning the military affairs of the country. He was continually instituting inquiries with regard to the condition and serviceableness of the war *matériel*, and concerning the different kinds of arms in use; and not only spent a great deal of his time in improving the artillery, which in modern wars has become of such great importance, but he also tried to obtain a correct knowledge of the general state and efficiency of the army.

Thus, for instance, in the year 1867, after the trouble with Prussia with respect to the Duchy of Luxembourg, he said to General Lebrun, "We have escaped. But from this moment we ought to think of the future, and in peace to be always ready for war; so that, should an event occur similar to the one we have just had to deal with, we may not be found living in a fool's paradise, and absolutely unprepared to defend ourselves."

And thereupon, in order to obtain a clear insight into the existing military organisation as a working mechanism, he himself thoroughly investigated it, and gave particular consideration to plans for the formation of independent armies on French territory; the object being to obtain thereby an organisation of the national forces more mobile and effective, and more

Digitized by Google

in accordance with the requirements of modern war. The results of his studies were subsequently (in 1867) published in a memoir which he submitted to Marshal Niel, then Minister of War.

Indeed, the army was always a special object of interest and solicitude with the Emperor, and nothing that might in any way contribute to the health, comfort, and efficiency of the French soldier ever failed, when brought to his notice, to find in him an earnest advocate.

I have already spoken of the interest taken by the Emperor in the War of the Rebellion of 1861–65, and of my efforts to keep him well informed with respect to its progress. But it was not information relating only to questions of strategy and tactics that he wished to have; he wanted to know all about the organisation of the commissariat and the quartermaster's department, and particularly about the kind of food and the quality of the clothing issued to the soldiers. At his request, I sent to the United States for samples of the clothing, the daily rations, and other supplies furnished by the Federal Government to the army while in active service. Many of these articles —such as desiccated vegetables, desiccated eggs, condensed milk, and so forth—were either American inventions or were used in the United States army on a scale vastly greater than had ever before been known. All these things interested his Majesty very much; and I remember now how, after examining with considerable care a specimen of the famous blue overcoats worn by the Federal soldiers, he exclaimed, "*C'est très bien.*" In making his inquiries,

Digitized by Google

no new facts seemed to be too trivial to be disregarded; and he liked to see the facts that he believed to be important stated in writing, if not in print. And while informing himself about the instruments made use of, or the means taken to increase the efficiency of the army in my own country, I observed that he always appreciated these things in proportion to the extent to which he thought they might, perhaps, be adopted or employed with advantage in the French army.

The reports which the military authorities gave to the Emperor just before the war began, in July, 1870, were such that he was forced to believe France was sufficiently prepared to enter into a war with Germany without incurring any extraordinary hazards.

It is true that he was aware there existed a considerable difference in the numerical strength of the armies of the two countries; but this difference was, as the best French strategists maintained, not sufficient to prejudice the success of the French, provided the regiments could be mobilised and concentrated quickly enough to make an immediate attack upon the enemy.

General Changarnier gave his opinion on the subject of numerical inferiority in war in the following words: "Do not let us try to make the number of our soldiers equal to that of our eventual adversaries; even by exhausting all our resources we should not succeed in doing so, but this should give us no anxiety. It is difficult for 3,000 men to fight successfully against 5,000; but it is not so difficult for 60,000 to fight against 100,000. The more the

Digitized by Google

numbers themselves increase, the less dangerous is a numerical inferiority." [1]

This opinion was shared by most of the French military authorities, among others by the Prince de Joinville, by Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, and by Marshal Lebœuf. But, of course, the *conditio sine quâ non* was that Marshal Lebœuf's statement in regard to the perfect readiness of the army to move should be correct. And this, as will be seen later, was not the case.

That the Emperor well understood the seriousness of the war which he was forced to undertake may be seen from the significant reply which he made to the long and optimistic address pronounced by M. Rouher in presence of the Senate, which on the 16th of July had assembled at Saint Cloud to express to his Majesty their patriotic sentiments. "We begin," said the Emperor, "a serious struggle. France will need the assistance of all her children."

These words of the Emperor should not be forgotten now, after the apprehensions of Europe have been verified. An impartial mind must recognise the fact that the defeat of the French in the war of 1870 was not due to any neglect on the part of Napoleon III., but that, on the contrary, the Emperor did all in his power to insure the victory to France. Had the people, on their part, not deserted him, after forcing him to declare war, and had they still maintained the character attributed to them by Cæsar, when he wrote, "*Nefas more Gallorem est, etiam in extremâ fortunâ deserere patronos.*" (It is considered

[1] "La Vérité sur la Campagne de 1870." Giraudeau, p. 101.

Digitized by Google

shameful by the Gauls to desert their leaders, even in the greatest adversity), it is but fair to suppose that the issue of this war might have been very different from what it was. The strength of Germany lay in its unity, and in the loyalty of its inhabitants; the weakness of France in its want of unity, and in the disloyalty of its citizens at a moment when all party interests and dynastic considerations should have been forgotten. Interior dissensions encourage and strengthen the common enemy; while even with the feeblest government success is possible in case the people unite all their efforts. In the discord which reigned in France in the year 1870, and in the action of certain men who had been, and were then, willing to sacrifice the army, the country, everything, to gratify their political hatred or satisfy their personal ambition, the direct cause of the defeat of the French is to be recognised. *France was in need of the assistance of all her children.*

The French nation had wished for war, and now the preparations for the contest began. On the 16th of July, at nine o'clock in the morning, a bill containing the following announcement was posted on the walls of the Eastern Railway Station:

"From this date (July 16th) the passenger service upon the lines of the Eastern Railway will be partially suspended. Travellers are requested to apply to the stationmaster for information regarding the departure of trains."

This proved that the advance of the army to the frontier had been decided upon.

Digitized by Google

On the same day, towards noon, thousands of people hurried to this station in order to witness the departure of the troops. At three o'clock the Ninety-fifth Regiment of the Line, which had been stationed at Fort de Bicêtre, arrived. It was accompanied by a large crowd singing the "Marseillaise" and crying "*Vive l'Armée.*" The number of spectators assembled between the entrance-gates and the station was so large that the soldiers could only proceed with difficulty.

The Eighty-first Regiment arrived at nearly the same time, led by a band playing the "Marseillaise."

The appearance of these soldiers was far from reassuring; and although, under the circumstances, the cries of "*À Berlin!*" and the noisy anticipations of victory were pardonable, and more or less confusion was to be expected, the unprejudiced witness could not fail to be struck with the want of discipline, solidity, and seriousness which was plainly visible in their ranks.

A still greater disappointment was produced by the appearance of the *Gardes Mobiles.* No real patriot who looked at these young men, some of whom appeared on the street in a partially intoxicated state, accompanied by women in the same condition, could help having grave apprehensions as to the success of the war; and many a face was saddened when companies of these ill-conditioned levies were seen to fill the trains that were leaving Paris.

Darker and darker grew the horizon, and it became plainer from day to day that the tempest of war was approaching.

Digitized by Google

On the 26th of July the Emperor Napoleon III. began to make his arrangements to leave the Palace of Saint Cloud for the purpose of assuming the command of the army; perhaps the most important of these was the appointment of the Empress, by special decree, Regent of the Empire.

For seventeen years the sovereign who was thus called to represent her country, in the midst of the vicissitudes of a great struggle, had shared the prosperous government of the Emperor; she had adorned the most splendid court in Europe by her intelligence, the brilliancy of her wit, by her grace and her beauty; and her ardent patriotism, and ever-present sympathy for the poor and suffering, justly entitled her to the confidence and love of the people.

Her noble character well qualified her for the position she was now to hold, and her knowledge of the affairs of government which she had obtained through the interest she had always taken in them, and by means of the instruction which she had received, rendered her perfectly competent to govern the country she loved so dearly. She had often taken part in the Cabinet councils during the years of peace, and the Emperor had explained to her the mechanism and initiated her into all the mysteries of State affairs; for he wished that the mother of the Prince Imperial should be able, in case of necessity, to educate her son for the serious tasks which the future might devolve upon him.

That her Majesty fully comprehended her responsibility and well understood her duty, must be acknowledged by all who have studied the history of the Regency; and few would blame her for

Digitized by Google

anything that happened during the short period of her administration, were they to consider under what difficulties it was entered upon and conducted. Even the most excellent qualifications of the Regent could not remedy the organic defect in the Government, which consisted in the restriction of her power at a time when it should have been concentrated in her person alone, and when she should have been subject to no other will or opinion than that of the Emperor and his ministers.

In the year 1859 she was able, as Regent, to discharge her duties easily and successfully, for she was free; while in the year 1870, under the "liberal Empire," her initiative was destroyed, and she was unable to act with any freedom on account of the interference of the Legislative Assembly, which, instead of simply maintaining its place as a co-ordinate power, tried to usurp the functions of the Executive, and thus hampered all her movements. The most perfect, the most democratic Republics that have ever existed, have concentrated authority in times of war. The Roman Commonwealth, for instance, placed the supreme power, in times of danger, in the hands of one man, a Dictator, while the French nation, although ruled by a constitutional monarch, tried to limit the power of the Regent by establishing an oligarchy that interfered directly and constantly with her duties. If these facts are considered, the results will not be wondered at.

The Emperor decided to leave Saint Cloud on the 28th of July, and I went to the palace on the morning

Digitized by Google

of that day to bid him farewell. Clouds covered the sky, and there was a heaviness in the atmosphere that seemed to forbode evil. The evening before, the Emperor, the Empress, and the Prince Imperial, as I learned, had partaken of the Communion at the hands of Monseigneur Darboy, the venerable Archbishop of Paris, who was assassinated by the Communists a few months later. Soon after I arrived, the Emperor, with the Empress and Prince Imperial, came out of the apartments of her Majesty into the great salon, where those who had come to bid him goodbye had gathered together. With a kind word or a pressure of the hand for every one, he passed on. As he took leave of those whom he knew intimately, and of his ministers and the members of the Imperial household who were present on this occasion, it seemed to me that there was an unusual tone of tenderness in his voice, and an expression of sadness on his face such as I had never seen before. To some one saying, "In a fortnight your Majesty will be in Berlin," he replied solemnly, "No, don't expect that, *even* if we are successful." He doubtless still believed in his destiny; but certainly no longer with assurance in his good fortune. Although apparently perfectly calm, it was evident that he was profoundly agitated. I noticed that he was smoking a cigar, something quite unusual for him to do.

About ten o'clock he got into his carriage to go to the station at the extremity of the park, where he was to take the train; the Empress being at his side, nervous, striving to look cheerful, and holding in her hand the hand of the young Prince, whose eyes had

Digitized by Google

filled with tears at the thought of leaving his mother. The carriage started immediately—the Emperor, after bowing to the people assembled in the Court, looking straight ahead, but seemingly observing nothing.

Together with many others I went to the station, where for the last time the Emperor received us, bidding goodbye to those with whom he had not before spoken, until the signal was given for the train to leave. Then, turning to the Empress, he embraced her tenderly, and after stepping into the carriage reserved for him and his suite, he looked back and waved his hand toward her; while we stood watching, in silence and with deep feeling, this really touching separation of the Imperial family.

As the train moved slowly away all heads were uncovered, and the cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" rang out, weak in volume but sharp and clear. In a few moments the Emperor and the Prince Imperial were out of sight, and the Empress, struggling to suppress her sobs, was on her way back to the palace, where she had spent so many happy days, where the first weeks of her married life had been passed, and which, beautiful and enduring as it then seemed to be, as if having served the purpose for which it had been created, and associated in some mysterious way with the fortune of the Imperial Government—for here it was, in 1804, that the Empire of Napoleon was proclaimed—a few months later was only a shapeless heap of twisted iron and calcined marble.

I could not fail to be profoundly impressed with the difference there was between the *morale* of those connected with this departure, whether as principals or

Digitized by Google

witnesses, and that exhibited on the occasion of the Emperor's leaving Paris in 1859, to join the army in Italy. Then, the streets filled with immense crowds, flags everywhere, the Emperor left the Tuileries in a carriage driven by postilions, surrounded by the great dignitaries of the Court, officers in brilliant uniforms, and the *cuirassiers* of the Guard, and was received all along the route to the Lyons Railway Station with the wildest enthusiasm, he himself saluting the vast assemblage, calm and confident. The popular exaltation carried with it a presage and an assurance of victory that gave to that departure the appearance of a triumph. Now, attended by a few members of his Government, his personal staff, and his official household, avoiding the capital, silently, almost secretly, the Emperor goes off to meet his destiny.

In these later years many sayings of the Emperor have been reported revealing his sense of the very doubtful result of the war; but the most conspicuous proof of his full appreciation of the gravity of the situation was the care with which, when leaving for the headquarters of his army, he avoided the demonstrations of enthusiasm with which he would have been greeted by the people of Paris had he appeared among them, and to which in his own soul he could find no response.

As I returned to Paris, mingled thoughts of fear and hope crossed my mind, but the feeling of anxiety prevailed. To an unprejudiced person the future of France could look but dark and uncertain, and I was quite prepared to hear that the French army had met with a repulse at the frontier. The campaign, how-

Digitized by Google

ever, proved to be far more disastrous than I had anticipated or even thought possible.

On the evening of the 28th of July the Emperor, accompanied by the Prince Imperial, arrived at Metz for the purpose of taking the chief command. He had left Saint Cloud, as we have said, troubled with doubts and with sad misgivings. The chief cause of his uneasiness was that he knew his army might have to contend with an enemy superior in numbers, and reported by his own most highly credited agents to possess great military qualities; but he knew also that he had done all he could to make the armies of France efficient, and that, if his country had to suffer on account of not having enough men under arms, or from insufficient preparation for this emergency, the blame could not justly be placed upon him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

THE FRENCH ARMY—SEDAN AND BISMARCK

The efforts of the Emperor to increase the strength of the army—His proposals are denounced by the Opposition—Favre—Thiers—Magnin—Jules Simon—State of the army when war was declared—On arriving at Metz the Emperor finds nothing ready—Misled by incorrect reports—A fair example—The situation becomes more and more difficult—A change of commanders—Sedan—A vivid account of the battle written by the Emperor—Further resistance impossible—The flag of truce—The letter of the Emperor to the King of Prussia—De Wimpfen meets Von Moltke and Bismarck at Donchéry—Interview between the Emperor and Bismarck described by Bismarck in a letter to the King of Prussia—Two letters—"Conneau."

NAPOLEON III., during the years immediately preceding the war of 1870, had earnestly advised reorganising the army, so that France might be strong enough to preserve peace, or to protect itself against any of the neighbouring countries in case of invasion; but the nation did not listen to him.

On the 12th of December, 1866, at his suggestion, a proposition was laid before the Legislative Assembly asking that the numerical strength of the army might be raised, when on a war footing, to 1,200,000 men—the number at the disposal of the King of Prussia. This was to be brought about with a very slight

Digitized by Google

increase in the charge on the Treasury, by changing the system of recruitment and by means of a reorganisation of the military service that would place about 500,000 men of the National Guard at the disposal of the Government, to be called into any field of military operations in the event of war. The proposition was denounced and strongly fought against by the leaders of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. It furnished a splendid subject for the phrase-makers. "What," said Jules Favre, "after reigning fifteen years, after the public debt has been increased by 8,000,000,000 francs, after we have been forced into the wars that you know about—it is to be decreed that the whole population is to be delivered over to the drill-sergeant, and that France, instead of being a workshop, shall henceforth be only a barrack!" And M. Garnier Pagès, while arguing to show that liberty had more to gain by defeats than by victories, declared that the boundaries of States were no longer fixed by mountains, or rivers, or by armies, and loftily proclaimed that "*la vraie frontière c'est le patriotisme.*"

M. Thiers spoke as follows:

"Gentlemen, you forget one thing. It may be said that there is only the National Guard to defend the country, and that, unless you create the *Garde Mobile*, France is open to the enemy. I must, however, ask you of what benefit to us is our admirable active army, which costs from 400,000,000 to 500,000,000 francs annually? Or, do you suppose that it will submit to the first shock, and that France will be immediately without defence? Some days ago it

Digitized by Google

was mentioned in this place that several Powers could oppose to you 1,200,000, 1,300,000, and even 1,500,000 men under arms. I do not say that these figures have influenced your votes; but, after all, these figures, when quoted, made upon you a very vivid impression. Well, then, these figures are altogether chimerical. According to the statement of the Honourable Minister, Prussia is able to oppose to us 1,300,000 men. But I must ask him, When has any one seen these formidable numbers? How many men did Prussia send into Bohemia in 1866? About 300,000. . . . Therefore, gentlemen, we must not give the least credit to these fanciful figures. They are fabulous, and have never had any existence in fact. Let us, then, be assured our army will be sufficient to stop the enemy. Behind it, the country will have time to breathe quietly and to organise its reserves. Will you not have always two or three months—that is to say, more time than you need—for the organisation of the *Garde Mobile* and for the utilisation of the popular zeal? Besides, there will be volunteers in abundance. You have far too little confidence in your country."[1]

[1] But on the 12th of August, 1870, after hearing of the first reverses that befell the French army, this adroit politician, with characteristic versatility, declared in the Chamber of Deputies he had never ceased to warn the Government that its preparations for a war with Germany were altogether insufficient: "There is not a minister, he affirmed, "who has not heard me say we were not ready; the country has been deceived." And this was said notwithstanding the fact that on the 30th of June—only *sixteen* days before the declaration of war—he had said in that same Chamber (I quote from the official journal): "If we are at peace, if we are

Digitized by Google

These were the words of M. Thiers when this proposition to increase the army and its efficiency was brought before the Legislative Assembly; and the speeches of his colleagues of the Opposition were to the same effect; and as they met with considerable support on the side of the majority, the consequence

threatened by no one, it is because we are known to be ready for war. This is as clear as the light—yes, evident to all those who know the situation in Europe. Do you know why peace has been preserved? It is because you are strong."

M. Thiers was always in opposition when not in power; he had no political convictions of any kind. He was true to but one party, that of Adolphe Thiers. In 1848, when Louis Napoleon was a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic, the *Revue Comique* asked M. Thiers, "Why do you support Prince Louis?" and answered the question for him as follows: "Because his incapacity is notorious; because he is impossible; because it is the Revolution over again; with Prince Louis the struggle will recommence; and with the contest there will be all the uncertainties, but *also all the hopes of the future!*" No analysis of a character could be more exact. M. Thiers' love of leadership was such that he was never known to be, in American political parlance, "on the fence" on any subject but once in his life. When M. de Belcastel one day asked him, "What are your relations with God?" he replied: "On that matter I think we shall be able to understand each other, for I am neither of the Court nor of the Opposition."

Many, perhaps most, Frenchmen are disposed to forgive and forget a great deal in M. Thiers' political life, not so much on account of his wonderful intellectual alertness, his marvellous gifts of speech, his wit, his diplomatic skill, the ingenious versatility with which he was able to adjust himself to every political situation, as in remembrance of his undaunted efforts, in the winter of 1870–71, to obtain the intervention of Europe in behalf of France, and the rapidity with which he subsequently, when "*Chef du pouvoir*," freed his country from the presence of the hated enemy.

The fact nevertheless remains, that on this "liberator of the territory" will for ever rest a very large part of the responsibility of having

Digitized by Google

was that the Emperor's plan for reorganising the army could not be carried out.[1]

Nearly two years later, during the session of 1868, this measure was resubmitted to the Chamber of Deputies, but only after it had been modified. The Emperor now proposed that France should have at least 750,000 men under arms, including the reserves;

pushed France into an abyss, from which it could only be extricated after its dismemberment, and liberated at the cost of a prodigious pecuniary ransom.

The Hon. Andrew D. White, our late distinguished Minister and Ambassador to St. Petersburg and Berlin, an acute and yet most unprejudiced observer of men and events, in his "Autobiography" recently published, refers to M. Thiers in a paragraph which I am quite sure foreshadows the judgment of Frenchmen themselves, when with the lapse of time they shall become able to write and to read their own history without passion and without prejudice.

Mr. White says: "I have studied M. Thiers as a historian, observed him as a statesman, and conversed with him as a social being, and he has always seemed, and still seems to me, the most noxious of all the great architects of ruin that France produced during the last half of the nineteenth century; and that is saying much. His policy was to discredit every Government which he found existing, in order that its ruins might serve him as a pedestal; and while he certainly showed great skill in mitigating the calamities which he did so much to cause, his whole career was damning. . . . In his writings, speeches, and intrigues he aided in upsetting not only the rule of the Bourbons in 1830, but the rule of Louis Philippe in 1848, the Second Republic in 1851, the Second Empire in 1870, and, had he lived, he would have doubtless done the same by the present Republic."

It would be hard indeed for any judicious, unbiassed person, familiar with recent French history, to come to any other conclusion. And the final judgment of the world is almost sure to be that if there was any man living in France at any time during the nineteenth century to whom the epithet of "*l'homme néfaste*" could be justly applied by his countrymen, that man was Adolphe Thiers.

[1] See Appendix VI.

Digitized by Google

but even this moderate demand met with the most violent opposition.

M. Magnin (afterward one of the members of the Government of the 4th of September, and one of those Deputies who voted for the war) said in the Chamber:

"You remember what an outburst of discontent was heard all over France at the announcement of the former project for increasing the army. Nobody would or could accept it. It was submitted to the State Council, which examined it in the Session of March; and, later, it was placed again before us, with an introduction explaining its motives, and with its most obnoxious points modified.

"In fact, the project in its new form reduced the time of service. There were still, however, 160,000 men required. In the active army the service was to be of five years' and in the reserve of seven years' duration. Those who did not serve in the active army were to serve four years in the *Garde Mobile*. . . . This still created a very violent and very ardent opposition, which was shared partially by your Commission, and I offer you my congratulations thereupon.

"The public did not look more favourably upon the new project than upon the preceding one; and the Emperor now announces to you that other modifications will be made. 'It is,' he says, 'not a question of militarising the country, but of modifying certain parts of the law of 1832.'"

M. Jules Simon (a member of the Government of the 4th of September, and who also voted for the war) said:

Digitized by Google

"Gentlemen, the chief aim of the project first presented was to ask for an army of 1,200,000 men. . . . I insist, before going farther, upon drawing your attention to the enormous figure—*1,200,000!* . . .

"After considerable changes which are due to public opinion, to the zeal of the members of the Commission, and the concessions made by the Government, we have finally come to the present project. But it is plainly to be seen that you still wish to have an army of 800,000 men, and in order to obtain this, you wish to create the *Garde Mobile*. The law which proposes this is not only a hard law, but an unmerciful one; one that weighs heavily upon those who are called to serve, and at the same time upon the whole population; because quartering the *Gardes Mobiles* in the houses of the inhabitants will be adding a new tax to those which already oppress us. In the end, the political consequences of the new system will be still more disastrous than the material consequences; and the law proposed is especially bad, because it will increase the *almightiness of the Emperor*. . . .

"The important point is not the number of soldiers, but the cause they have to defend. If the Austrians were beaten at Sadowa, it was because they did not wish to fight for the House of Hapsburg against the German fatherland. Yes, gentlemen, there is only one cause which makes an army invincible, and that is liberty."

Strangely enough, many of the very men who were systematically opposing any increase of the army were most violent in their denunciations of the pacific policy of the Imperial Government with respect to Germany.

Digitized by Google

"The soldier is a white slave," said M. Émile de Girardin one day; and the next day he claimed the Rhine as the rightful frontier of France, and, working himself into a frenzy over his theme, finally shrieked out: "If, to obtain it, it is necessary to give Europe a shower-bath of blood, let the shower-bath be given to Europe."

The proposed law in its modified form was at last adopted in 1868. By this enactment the regular army was increased to a total strength of 744,568 men, including the reserves (329,318); and provision was made for the mobilisation of 500,000 National Guards for the defence of the fortresses. But the Opposition voted against it; and among those who opposed it were Messrs. Bethmont, Magnin, Glais-Bizoin, Dorian, Jules Favre, Carnot, Thiers, Jules Simon, Ernest Picard, Garnier-Pagès, and Pelletan. Had the will of these gentlemen been accomplished, the army would have been much smaller than it was when the war began.

But while the army was thus officially increased in number, its effective strength was, at the same time, actually reduced by the extension given to a pernicious system of furloughs subservient to certain political interests, and by virtue of which large numbers of soldiers were permitted to be absent from the ranks. On the 20th of March, 1868, Marshal Niel reported to the Senate that of the regular troops in the second year of their service, *twenty-five* per cent. were absent on a *six months'* leave; that of those in the third year of their service, *a third* were absent; that of the fourth year's men, *two-fifths* were absent;

Digitized by Google

and that of the troops in the last year of their service, *one-half* were absent on a *six months'* furlough.

When war was declared in July, 1870, more than a third of the French regular army was absent on leave. And, more extraordinary still, it was discovered that the cavalry horses had been "furloughed" to the farmers in about the same proportion. And these furloughs had been granted notwithstanding the repeated warnings the Emperor had given of the consequences that might follow.

If, therefore, France had too small an army at the beginning of the war of 1870 (415,000 men, not counting the reserves), and the rapid mobilisation of this scattered army was impossible, it was certainly not the fault of the Emperor. On the contrary, the responsibility belongs to those politicians who prevented him from doing what he earnestly wished to do.

Nor does the responsibility rest entirely or even principally upon the political opponents of the Government. The Deputies at this time were nearly all Imperialists, nominally at least; and if the Emperor's proposition to reorganise and strengthen the army failed to obtain the support of the majority in the Legislative Chamber, it was because some of these Deputies honestly believed it to be unnecessary and inexpedient, and others were more anxious about their own personal popularity with their tax-paying constituents than mindful of the interests of the Government and of the nation.[1]

[1] These statements are true; but they fail to set forth the whole truth. Many of the friends of the Government regarded the project

Digitized by Google

The time now had suddenly come when many patriots recognised the serious mistakes that had been made, and deeply regretted that the number of French soldiers was not greater. But the nation desired war; and the Emperor considered that he had no right, even had he the power, to refuse to submit to the national will. His only desire, as the representative of this will, was to do the best that could be done under the circumstances. These made a rapid movement forward imperative, if the campaign was to succeed. His plan was to attack the German troops on German soil, to cross the Rhine at Maxau, and to separate North Germany from South Germany. But the passage of the Rhine had to be effected before the enemy could concentrate near that river, otherwise the execution of his plan would be impossible without risking great losses. All, therefore, depended upon the precision and quickness of

as one that endangered the stability of the Empire. A majority even of the Members of the Emperor's Cabinet considered it to be politically inexpedient, whatever may have been their opinion of its desirability from a military point of view. They knew that the people generally were strongly opposed to increasing the number of men liable to be called into active military service; and, especially, to any law that diminished the number of exempts. So very unpopular was this measure that after it was finally passed, with numerous amendments and ameliorations, Gressier, the reporter, failed to be re-elected in his Canton. "I like you very much," said an old farmer to him, "but I shall not vote for you—you have taken my son from me and made him a soldier." The Imperial Government could count upon the solid vote of the "rustics"—but only on certain conditions. "*Un jour*," said M. Jules Ferry, "*les masses agricoles montrèrent qu'elles pouvaient* VOULOIR." The Emperor knew this, but he wished also to do his duty.

Digitized by Google

the mobilisation of the French army, and upon its readiness for action.

How fearful, then, must have been the disappointment of his Majesty when, on his arrival at Metz, he found that nothing was in readiness, and that the reports which he had received at different times from his chief military officers were incorrect and misleading.

In the year 1868 Marshal Niel sent a report to the Emperor, in which he said that all the orders had been prepared for a very speedy calling out of the soldiers of the reserve, and that, thanks to the measures taken, the several corps which were to form the active army could be made up ready for service, in case of an emergency, within a space of nine, or, at the most, of fourteen days. On the 9th of April, 1869, Marshal Niel, speaking in the Senate on the state of the army, made use of words still more assuring. He then said: "Our situation is such at the present time that, if we will maintain it, we can never be surprised." And two or three days later, in the same place, he declared: "To-day, whether we are in peace or at war is not of the slightest consequence to the Minister of War; he is always ready." Marshal Lebœuf, who was the successor of Marshal Niel as Minister of War, confirmed these statements, and also insisted that the armies would be ready to act within a fortnight, should they be called out.

On the 6th of July, 1870, Marshal Lebœuf submitted to the Emperor a schedule of the military forces at the disposition of the Government. According to this statement there should have been 350,000

Digitized by Google

regular troops on the frontier within fourteen days after the calling out of the reserves, and 100,000 *Gardes Mobiles* besides. This was the force to begin with; but before a month should have elapsed, 400,000 troops were also to be ready for action. To this force, the Marshal said, Prussia would only be able to oppose 390,000 men, and that, counting the soldiers of the Southern States, the German army would have a strength of only 420,000 men. (In fact, the three German armies of invasion numbered at first but 338,000 men.) Relying upon the correctness of these reports, the Emperor might have had good reason to hope for success, especially as his plan was to attack the Prussians before the armies of the Southern German States could be united with them. When, however, he arrived at his headquarters three weeks later, he found, to his great dismay, that the eight French army corps sent to the frontier numbered only 220,000 men.

This state of things was very serious; but the most alarming discovery made was the fact that important instructions which the Emperor had given with regard to the distribution of military stores of every sort, even to the baggage train, had not been obeyed, although Marshal Niel had reported to the contrary. As the result of this neglect, the mobilisation was paralysed at the most critical moment.

The letters sent by the Emperor to the Empress at this time were most discouraging. "He was," she said, "*navré*. Nothing was ready; the confusion indescribable; the plan of the campaign must be abandoned on account of the inevitable delay."

Digitized by Google

The details of military organisation are not very interesting to the general reader, but I think I may count upon his indulgence, if I give the facts in a single case that is a fair example of many others, and which will show plainly what reason the Emperor had for believing his army ready for action in July, 1870; as also that the non-execution of his orders was among the causes of the defeat of the French.

In the year 1868 the Emperor inquired at his War Department how long it would take to have in readiness the Government waggons that were stored at Vernon. The answer was that this operation would take several months. Surprised to hear such a reply, he immediately gave orders to have the waggons distributed over different parts of the country; and the Minister of War reported shortly afterward, in the following words, that these orders were in the way of execution.

"The concentration of all the baggage waggons at Vernon is dangerous in case of a war, as the length of time necessary for making ready so much *matériel* (6,700 waggons, 10,000 sets of harness, &c.) might interfere very much with a quick mobilisation of the army. To remedy this difficulty, the following measures have been adopted:

"Barracks are to be erected in the Parc de Châteauroux for about 1,200 waggons, so that the squadron of the baggage train, which is quartered there, will find its waggons handy, without being obliged to send to Vernon for them.

"Use is to be made of the circumstance that a detachment of artillery and engineers is quartered at

Digitized by Google

Satory, by placing there all those waggons which have to be furnished to the staffs and to the different corps of these troops. . . .

"Sheds are to be constructed at the camp of Châlons for about 600 waggons, which are to serve for the baggage train accompanying the first divisions.

"The regimental waggons which are to serve the First Corps are to be distributed in the military posts of the East.

"According to this plan, the First Army will be able to find, between the camp at Châlons and the frontier, all the waggons that it will need for the march.

"The Army of Lyons will have its means right at hand; transportation for the Army of Paris will be at Satory, and, at the same time, the parks of Châteauroux and Vernon will furnish the waggons necessary for the Second and Third Armies.

"At this moment the small depôts of the East are being constructed! the waggons for one division are at Metz; at Strasbourg there are waggons for one brigade, and at Besançon for one regiment. The depôt of Toul will be opened in a few days.

"The constructions to be made at Châlons, according to the above plan, will probably be finished within one month.

"Lyons has the waggons necessary for one division of infantry and one division of cavalry; it will receive within a short time the waggons for another division of infantry—when the *matériel* which has come back from Civita Vecchia has been repaired.

"The barracks which are at present being erected at Satory will hold all the regimental waggons.

Digitized by Google

"It is to be hoped that the distribution of the *matériel* will be accomplished before spring, with the exception of that to be sent to the Parc de Châteauroux, as the works there cannot yet be commenced on account of the condition of the ground."

From this report it will be seen that the Emperor had a right to believe that no considerable delay would occur with respect to the distribution of the army waggons. When the war of 1870 began, almost two years had elapsed since the arrangements indicated above were, according to the official report, to be immediately completed. What, then, will the reader say when I inform him that these waggons were still stored up at Vernon and Satory on the outbreak of hostilities in the year 1870, and that it was a long while before the greater part of them could be sent to the different corps, thus hampering the mobilisation enormously?

There is a point in the preceding statement which should not be allowed to pass unobserved, namely, the waggons were apparently sufficient in number to meet the requirements of the service. In fact, the rigid parliamentary inquiry instituted by the Government of the Republic, after the war, has made it perfectly clear that the French War Department in 1870 was well supplied with nearly all the *matériel* necessary for a campaign, with the troops then at the disposal of the Government. The fatal error—the unpardonable blunder—of Marshal Lebœuf, and of his predecessor, Marshal Niel, consisted not so much in overestimating the number of "gaiter buttons" or other military stores *en magazin*, as in underestimating

Digitized by Google

the time necessary to deliver these supplies where they were needed, and to provide for their regular distribution.[1] The want of something somewhere put a stop to every effective movement everywhere. As we have seen, it was the opinion of both these war ministers that a *fortnight* would be time enough in which to equip and place the whole French army upon a war footing. Not only was it found to be impossible to do this, but it was not done at the end of a month. Nor would it have been possible in a much longer time, even under the conditions of peace, to have effectively mobilised the French army, and got its whole rather complicated machinery into good working order.

But, strange as it may seem, perhaps in no particular was the French army less prepared to enter upon a campaign than on account of the general ignorance of the geography of the country to be invaded and the absence of maps even of France

[1] Unpardonable to every one but to him who was the principal sufferer. When preparing the article entitled "Projet d'organisation de l'armée du Rhin," published in the "Oeuvres posthumes de Napoleon III.," his collaborator, Count de la Chapelle, inserted a note addressed to the Emperor by Marshal Lebœuf, in July, 1870, in which the Marshal says: "In fifteen days I can at any time throw upon the frontier an effective force of 400,000 men." But the Emperor would not consent to have it published. Writing to the Count on the subject, he said: "Although the first document under the name 'note of the Minister of War' is of the greatest importance, as regards my own responsibility, I prefer to strike it out, as it accuses too clearly poor Marshal Lebœuf, who is already so unfortunate. Consequently I pray you to suppress it." Indeed, the Emperor in the kindness of his heart, was willing to pardon nearly everything and everybody.

Digitized by Google

itself. Detachments and whole divisions of the army wandered about, not knowing exactly where they were or where they were going. The ignorance of the French general staff with respect to the topographical features of the ground upon which the battles of the war were to be fought would have been incredible, had not the greatest disasters been directly precipitated by the lack of such specific information and knowledge. There were generals who believed Wissembourg was in Bavaria; who did not know that the Meuse and the Moselle were two separate rivers, or that Sedan was a fortified place. And why should they be expected to know more than their superiors, if the story be true that is related of one of the marshals who was as conspicuous during this war as he was unfortunate in his leadership? Having occasion to send a letter to Sydney, New South Wales, the Marshal, so it is reported, asked a member of his staff if he could tell him where Sydney was. "In England," was the answer. "No," replied another member of the staff, "you are mistaken; it is in the United States." Perplexed by this contradictory information, the Marshal cried out, "Send for de H——," to whom, when he entered the room, the Marshal said, "Tell me, de H——, in what country is this place, Sydney?" "In New South Wales," was the reply. "But where is New South Wales?" "In Australia, your Excellency." "And in what country is Australia?" "In the Indian Ocean," promptly replied M. de H——.

"*Sapristi!*" exclaimed the Marshal; "*ce diable de H—— il connaît tout!*" (he knows everything).

Digitized by Google

The discovery of this state of unreadiness, that it was no longer possible to execute his plan of campaign, must have given a severe shock to the monarch, who foresaw what evil consequences would inevitably arise from it; and it is reported that on the day of his arrival at Metz, when he recognised the situation of the army and in what manner his orders had been executed, the perspiration came out upon his forehead in great drops, and that he exclaimed, "We are lost!"

And, as if the disorder and absence of preparation visible on all sides were not sufficiently discouraging, the Emperor found lying on his desk at the Prefecture some thirty anonymous letters denouncing the incapacity of his generals, and demanding that they should be superseded or discharged. Certainly one of the most extraordinary things that ever happened to a sovereign on the eve of battle!

That the delay required to prepare the army for active service was the proximate cause of the French reverses in the first battles of the war has since been universally acknowledged.

Napoleon III. therefore stated the case with absolute accuracy when he wrote, on the 29th of October, from Wilhelmshöhe, to a distinguished English general: "Our disasters have arisen from the fact that the Prussians were ready before we were, and that we were taken, so to say, *en flagrant délit de formation.*"

As one might have expected from the manner in which the campaign was opened, so it went on. The Germans gained one victory after another, and the situation of the French troops grew from day to day more difficult.

Digitized by Google

When the news of the first defeats became known in Paris, it created general consternation. Public opinion recognised the incapacity of Marshal Lebœuf, and the Parisians began also to mistrust the capacity of his Majesty as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Rhine. The Emperor therefore considered it wise not only to accept the resignation of the Marshal, but also to lay down his own military command. There now remained for him nothing but to choose an able successor.

In a council of the chiefs of the Army Corps, stationed at that time near Metz, it was finally decided that Marshal Bazaine should be appointed Commander of the Army of the Rhine, assisted by Marshal MacMahon, who was to take command of his own army corps, as well as of the corps of Generals de Failly and Félix Douay, and of the new columns which were being formed at Châlons.

On the 16th of August his Majesty made another concession to public opinion. At the suggestion of some of his generals, and at the urgent request of Prince Napoleon, he appointed General Trochu Governor of Paris—an appointment which, as will be seen in the following chapters, had very serious consequences.

Napoleon III. unselfishly yielded to the wishes of his people by entrusting the most responsible posts to men whom the military experts and public opinion had declared to be the most capable;[1] but the con-

[1] These appointments were at the time unanimously commended. When Count de Palikao announced to the National Assembly that the Army of the Rhine was under the command of Marshal Bazaine,

Digitized by Google

cessions which his Majesty made proved fatal, for they led swiftly to the disaster of Sedan.

The events which took place during those last fateful days of his reign are vividly described in a paper written by the Emperor shortly before his death. The following pages contain a translation of a part of this narrative:

"On the 30th of August, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the Emperor and the Duke of Magenta were on the heights of Mouzon, where the Twelfth Corps was in position. Both had alighted from their horses. The artillery of General de Failly was heard in the distance, and General Pajol, who had made a reconnaissance in order to judge how matters stood, had brought back the news that the Fifth Corps was retiring upon Mouzon. The Marshal then told the Emperor that the whole army would soon have passed

that the Marshal was the only General-in-Chief, the applause was great. "Then," cried M. Barthélemy Saint Hilaire, "Marshal Bazaine is Generalissimo. That will give confidence to the country." Jules Ferry declared that this appointment gave full satisfaction to the Chamber, and would be approved by the whole country. Gambetta afterward spoke of the Marshal as "our glorious Bazaine"; and the anti-Imperialist faction even claimed the honour of having forced the Government to place the command of the army in the hands of this general officer. M. de Kératry, while admitting that this appointment was the work of the anti-Imperialists, justifies their act, and, by implication, gives to the Emperor all the justification in the matter that the truth of history requires. M. de Kératry says: "The Opposition, in presenting to the Regent the name of the Marshal for the post of Commander-in-Chief, was moved only by a pure sentiment of patriotism, having in mind but one thing, the thoroughly tried military talent of the Marshal."

Digitized by Google

to the right bank of the Meuse; that he himself did not wish to leave Mouzon before the operation was completed, but that all was going well. He advised the Emperor to repair to Carignan, where the First Corps must already have arrived, and where the head-quarters were to be established.

"Napoleon III. therefore departed full of confidence as to the result of the day. But scarcely an hour after his arrival at Carignan, General Ducrot came to him with the most alarming news: the Fifth Corps had been thrown back in disorder on Mouzon, along with the brigade that was sent to its aid; and the Marshal begged the Emperor to go as quickly as possible to Sedan, to which place the army would retire. The Emperor could not believe that the scene had so completely changed within a few hours; he therefore wished to remain with the First Corps, but at the solicitation of General Ducrot he decided to take the train, and arrived at eleven o'clock in the night at Sedan. Here he was urged to continue his route as far as Mézières while the railway was still free. He could there rally the corps of General Vinoy, and establish a new centre of resistance in one of the strongholds of the North; but he thought that, in this case, he would be accused of seeking his own personal safety, and he therefore preferred to share the fate of the army, whatever it might be. The equipages and escort having been left behind at Carignan, the Emperor, alone and on foot, followed by his aides-de-camp, in the silence of the night entered the city of Sedan, which was about to be the theatre of such terrible events.

Digitized by Google

"Sedan, classed among the fortified places, is situated upon the right bank of the Meuse; only the suburbs of Torcy lie upon the left bank. They are covered by advanced works which form a vast *tête de pont*. Formerly the city, owing to the feeble range of the cannon then in use, was protected by the hills which surround it. At the present time it is exposed to the artillery of the enemy when placed upon the heights which rise upon both sides of the Meuse. Moreover, in the year 1870 it was incompletely armed, badly provisioned, and possessed no outworks. On the right bank of the river are two tributaries, which form right angles with it—the Floing below and the Givonne above the city. One of these little streams runs out from the village of Illy to that of Floing, and the other from the village of Givonne to that of Bezailles; they surround the territory where the battle was about to take place. The prominent points of the battlefield are the Calvary of Illy, near the village of the same name, and the forest of La Garenne, situated west of the village of Givonne. The only route upon which a free communication with Mézières was possible was the high-road passing through the villages of Floing, Saint Albert, Vrigne-aux-Bois, and Tumécourt.

"In order to secure a retreat upon Mézières, the narrow defile which extends from Floing, in the direction of Vrigne-aux-Bois, should have been strongly occupied, the place itself should have been abandoned, and the left wing ought to have rested upon the heights of Illy and of the Givonne.

"General Ducrot, it must be recognised, had cor-

Digitized by Google

rectly estimated the position. It was at the Calvary of Illy that he wished to establish the centre of resistance. On the 31st of August, however, the troops were placed in position around the town; they were distributed in a semicircle, from which Sedan as a centre was distant some 3,000 metres, the extremities touching the villages of Bazeilles and Floing.

"From this semicircular position it was inevitable that the line of retreat must be towards the centre; and that if the troops were repulsed they would, by a natural instinct, precipitate themselves towards the city, which thus became an *entonnoir* (a funnel) to engulf them. To the north of Sedan are the remains of an abandoned entrenchment called the Old Camp, which overlooks the surrounding ravines; and all the ground which extends to the south of this camp is covered, as General Ducrot says, 'with stone walls, with gardens and hedges, and with a certain number of houses, which, joining those at the lower end of Givonne, made of this spot a veritable labyrinth. Defended by a few solid troops, it would have been very difficult to dislodge them; but, on the contrary, if a large body of soldiers, repulsed and in disorder, should retire here for shelter, it would be impossible to rally and re-form them.'

"It was upon this uneven ground which we have just described that on the 1st of September, in the morning, the battle began. The enemy attacked simultaneously our two wings, evidently intending to surround us and cut off our retreat.

"The Marshal, Duke of Magenta, at once repaired

Digitized by Google

to the outposts, and the Emperor, to whom he had sent news of this movement, mounted his horse and followed him, accompanied by his staff and a troop of guides.

"It is easy to understand his state of mind. No longer exercising the functions of General-in-Chief, he was not sustained by the feeling of responsibility which inspires the soul of him who commands; nor did he feel the uplifting excitement of those who are acting under orders, and who know that their devotion may lead to victory. The powerless witness of a foregone defeat, convinced that on this fatal day his life, as well as his death, was useless for the common safety, he advanced to the field of battle with that stolid resignation which faces danger without weakness, but also without enthusiasm.

"On departing from the Sub-Prefecture, the Emperor met Marshal MacMahon, who was being brought back wounded in an ambulance waggon. After having exchanged a few words with him, he proceeded in the direction of the village of Bazeilles, where the division of marines was hotly engaged. At Balan, General de Vassoigne gave him an account of the position of the troops. As every group of officers immediately attracted the fire of the enemy, the Emperor left his escort and most of his aides-de-camp, with a battalion of chasseurs that was screened by a wall, and went forward, followed only by four persons, towards an open height from which a view of the greater portion of the field of battle could be obtained.

"At this moment General Ducrot, to whom Marshal

Digitized by Google

MacMahon had transferred the command, was executing a retreat, which under the existing circumstances was the best course to take. The Emperor sent to him one of his orderly officers, Captain d'Hendicourt, to ascertain the direction he wished to give to the troops. This promising young officer never reappeared; he was probably killed by a shell. The entire ground upon which the party stood was ploughed by the enemy's projectiles, that were bursting around them on every side.

"After remaining several hours between La Moncelle and Givonne, the Emperor wished to go over to the lines of infantry which could be seen to the left, on the heights, but were separated from him by an impassable ravine. In order to reach them, he had to make a circuit, which brought him upon the ground cut across by hollows, hedges, and garden walls, that formed the labyrinth mentioned above. In the ravine, called the 'Bottom of Givonne,' the roads were crowded with the wounded, who were being carried to the ambulances; and a park of artillery blocked the avenues, through which Goze's division could proceed only with the greatest difficulty. When the Imperial party arrived near the old entrenched camp, a farther advance became impossible, as they met the infantry that occupied this place in the act of retiring in good order towards the town. It was now evident that every line of retreat was cut off by the enemy, who occupied the circumference; for the projectiles directed towards the centre struck the troops both in front and in the rear. Many of the soldiers, alleging that they were without cartridges,

Digitized by Google

were hurrying towards the only gate of the town which remained open.

"After having been during nearly five hours the witness of a struggle the end of which could be foreseen, the Emperor, despairing of being able to reach the heights of Illy from the place where he was, decided to go back to the town to confer with the wounded Marshal, and in the hope of leaving it again through the gate that opens on the departmental road to Mézières. Three officers of his staff had been wounded at his side and carried away by the soldiers; these were the circumstances under which he returned to the Sub-Prefecture, several shells bursting in front of his horse, but without harming him.[1]

"The road by which he wished to pass out, he ordered to be reconnoitred at once; but he was informed that the Mézières gate was barricaded, that it was impossible to get through it, and that the streets through which he had just come were already blocked by a confused mass of men, horses, and waggons. It was necessary, therefore, to remain in the town and await events. Towards three o'clock an aide-de-camp of General de Wimpfen, who, as senior officer, had

[1] With that forgetfulness of everything which was strictly personal to himself, so characteristic of him, the Emperor makes no allusion to the physical tortures he was all this time suffering. After he had dismounted, when no longer able to sit in the saddle, he was compelled several times, while walking over the ground he here describes, to stop and take hold of a tree to support himself, to keep from falling. "Finally," says M. Paul de Cassagnac, "I helped him into a carriage; and on arriving at the Sub-Prefecture, he walked some thirty yards leaning on my arm, scarcely able to drag himself along."

Digitized by Google

taken the command-in-chief, succeeded with great difficulty in making his way to the Sub-Prefecture. He came to propose to the Emperor to place himself at the head of such troops as could be rallied, and to make an attempt to cut through the enemy's lines in the direction of Carignan. The first impulse of Napoleon III. was to accept the proposal; but he soon saw that, not to speak of the difficulty of getting through the crowded streets on horseback, it would be unbecoming for him to sacrifice, in order to save himself, the lives of a great many soldiers, and to escape with the Commander-in-Chief, abandoning the rest of the army, and leaving it without a head, exposed to certain loss. He refused, therefore, to accept General de Wimpfen's offer.

"During this time the situation had assumed a more and more serious character. The heroic charges of the cavalry had not been able to arrest the advances of the enemy. The brave General Margueritte, mortally wounded, had just been brought at his request beside the Emperor. At this moment the surrounding hills on both sides of the Meuse were lined with several hundred pieces of artillery, which by a converging fire threw their projectiles into the city. Houses were on fire, roofs were crushed in, and death made many victims in the crowded streets, in the barracks which were transformed into hospitals, and in the courtyards, where soldiers from every branch of the service had taken refuge.

"In the meantime the commanders of the three army corps, Generals Lebrun, Douay, and Ducrot, came one after the other to declare to the Emperor

Digitized by Google

that further resistance had become impossible; that the soldiers, after having fought for twelve hours without rest or food, were discouraged; that all those who had not been able to get into the town were huddled together in the trenches and against the walls; and that it was necessary to come to some decision.[1]

"From the day of leaving Châlons up to this time the Emperor had considered it to be his duty not to interfere in any way whatsoever with the arrangements and decisions of the Commander-in-Chief; but at this supreme moment, when, by an unheard-of fatality, 80,000 men appeared to be exposed to certain death without being able to make any resistance, he remembered that he was the sovereign; that he had charge of souls; and that he ought not to let men be massacred before his eyes who on some future occasion might be able to serve their country.

"Napoleon III. accordingly sent one of his aides-de-camp up to the citadel in order to assure himself of the state of things. The officer with very great difficulty succeeded in passing through the streets and

[1] "The streets were full of the wounded and the dead. All the superior officers had either been killed or wounded. As for our batteries, they were fought against ten times their number, superior also in range and accuracy of fire. These batteries were served until they were silenced or destroyed; in some of them not a horse, not a man was left. The caissons blew up like fireworks. The cavalry of Margueritte, those grizzly old *chasseurs d'Afrique*, those heroes, charged three times, and three times were dashed to pieces. They did their duty. But human strength has its limits; and when we entered into Sedan we were helpless—nothing more could be done."—*General Ducrot-Wimpfen versus de Cassagnac.*

Digitized by Google

in reaching the citadel, which itself was filled with soldiers who had taken refuge there. The report which this aide-de-camp brought back confirmed the words of the corps commanders. The Emperor, in consequence, sent General Lebrun to General de Wimpfen with the advice that he should ask for a suspension of hostilities, which would give time, if it were accorded, to collect the wounded and to consider what it was best to do. General Lebrun not returning, and the number of victims increasing every moment, the Emperor took it upon himself to order that a flag of truce be hoisted. Napoleon III. fully understood the responsibility he thereby incurred, and he foresaw the accusations which would be brought against him. The situation appeared to him in all its gravity; and the remembrance of a glorious past, in its contrast with the present, increased the bitterness of the moment. Who would ever admit that the army of Sebastopol and Solférino could be forced to lay down its arms? How would it ever be possible to make the world understand that, when confined within narrow limits, the more numerous the troops the greater must be the confusion, and the less the possibility of re-establishing the order indispensable for fighting?

"The prestige which the French army so justly enjoyed was about to vanish in a moment; and, in the presence of a calamity without precedent, the Emperor, although having had no hand in the military movements that led to it, was to remain alone responsible in the eyes of the world for this great disaster, and for all the misfortunes which the war might bring in its train! And, as if at this last hour nothing should be

Digitized by Google

lacking to increase the gravity of the situation, General de Wimpfen sent his resignation to the Emperor; thus leaving the overwhelmed and disbanded army without a chief, and without guidance, at a time when the greatest energy was necessary to establish a little order, and to treat with the enemy with a better chance of success. The resignation was not accepted; and the General-in-Chief was made to understand that, having commanded during the battle, his duty obliged him not to desert his post in these very critical circumstances.

"While the white flag was being hoisted, a Prussian officer asked permission to enter headquarters.

"Through him it was learned that the King of Prussia was at the gates of the town, but that he was ignorant of the presence of Napoleon III. in Sedan.

"Under these circumstances, the Emperor believed that the only thing which remained for him to do was to address himself directly to the ruler of Northern Germany.

"It had so often been repeated in the journals that the King of Prussia was not making war against France, but against the Emperor only, that the latter was persuaded he might, by disappearing from the scene and putting himself into the hands of the victor, obtain the least disadvantageous conditions for the army, and might give, at the same time, an opportunity to the Regent to conclude a peace in Paris. He therefore sent by General Reille, one of his aides-de-camp, a letter to the King of Prussia, in which he announced that he would surrender to him his sword.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Published by permission of the Berlin Photographic Co., New York.

GENERAL REILLE PRESENTING TO KING WILLIAM THE LETTER OF NAPOLEON III.

From a photograph of the painting by A. von Werner.

To face p. 265.

Digitized by Google

"The King, surrounded by his staff, received General Reille, and taking in his hand the letter which he brought, opened it and read the following words :

"'MONSIEUR MON FRÈRE :

"'N'ayant pas pu mourir au milieu de mes troupes, il ne me reste plus qu'à remettre mon épée entre les mains de votre Majesté.

"'Je suis de votre Majesté le bon frère

"'NAPOLEON.'

("'MY BROTHER :

"'Having been unable to die among my troops, the only thing I can now do is to place my sword in the hands of your Majesty.

"'I am, your Majesty's good brother,

"'NAPOLEON.')

"At first King William seemed astonished that the letter did not announce the capitulation of the town and army ; but having been informed that General de Wimpfen was the French Commander-in-Chief, he requested the presence of this General at the Prussian headquarters that evening." [1]

The meeting took place late in the evening, in the village of Donchéry, the persons present being, on the one side, General von Moltke, Count Bismarck, General von Blumenthal, and a number of officers ; and, on the other side, General de Wimpfen, General Castelnau, and General Faure. General de Wimpfen

[1] "Œuvres Posthumes de Napoléon III." E. Lachaud, Paris, 1873, p. 325 ff.

Digitized by Google

opened the conference by asking what conditions the King of Prussia wished to impose upon the French army were it to surrender. "They are very simple," replied General von Moltke; "the whole army are to be considered as prisoners, with their arms and baggage. We will allow the officers to retain their arms, as a testimonial of our esteem for their courage; but they will be held as prisoners of war, like the troops."

General de Wimpfen at first tried to obtain concessions by appealing to the generosity of the German commander. When he, however, saw that the latter remained immovable, he broke out as follows:

"Well, if you cannot offer us better conditions, I will appeal to my army—to its honour; and I will succeed in breaking through your lines, or I will defend myself in Sedan."

Whereupon the Prussian General, who was perfectly informed as to the situation of both armies, explained so clearly the actual state of things to the French commander, that General de Wimpfen, seeing that from a strategic point of view his threat was without weight, turned to the political side of the question, and said:

"You are going to conclude peace, and doubtless you wish to do this at once. The French nation is more generous and chivalrous than any other nation, and consequently it knows how to appreciate the generosity which is shown to it, and is grateful for the consideration that is bestowed upon it. If you accord to us terms which are flattering to the *amour propre* of our army, the nation will be equally flattered;

Digitized by Google

and then the bitterness of the defeat will be diminished in the hearts of the people, and a peace that is concluded on such conditions will have a chance of being durable.

"If you, on the contrary, insist upon rigorous measures against us, you surely will excite anger and hatred in the heart of every soldier, and the pride of the whole nation will be grievously wounded; for it considers itself in fellowship with the army and shares its emotions.

"You, therefore, will awaken all the dangerous instincts that are slumbering under the cover of an advanced civilisation, and you may kindle the flames of an interminable war between France and Germany."

Moltke remained silent, but Count Bismarck answering, said:

"At the first glance, General, your argument seems serious; but, in fact, it is only specious, and cannot stand discussion. One ought to count, in general, very little upon gratitude, and never upon the gratitude of a nation. There are times when the gratitude of a sovereign may be expected; in some cases, also, that of his family; in some exceptional cases, entire confidence even may be placed in the gratitude of these. But I repeat it, one must expect nothing from the gratitude of a nation. If the French nation were like any other nation; if it had solid institutions; if, like our own, it lived in the reverence and respect of these institutions; if there sat upon its throne a sovereign firmly established, then we could take into account the gratitude of the Emperor and his son.

Digitized by Google

But in France the Governments, during the last eighty years, have been so little durable, so multitudinous, they have changed with such extraordinary rapidity, and so entirely against all expectation, that one cannot count upon anything in your country. If a neighbouring nation were to found hopes upon the friendship of a French sovereign, it would commit an act of craziness—*it would be like building in the air.*

"Moreover, it would be folly to imagine that France could pardon our success. You are an irritable people, envious, jealous, and proud to excess. Within the last two hundred years, France has declared war *thirty times* against Prussia [correcting himself], against Germany; and this time you have declared war against us, as always, through jealousy, because you are not able to pardon us our victory of Sadowa. And yet Sadowa cost you nothing, and could diminish in no way your glory; but it has seemed to you that victory was a possession uniquely reserved for yourselves, that military glory was a monopoly of yours. You could not support by the side of you a nation as strong as you are; you have never been able to pardon us for Sadowa, where neither your interests nor your glory were at stake. And you never would pardon us the disaster of Sedan! Never! If we were to make peace now—in five years—in ten years—as soon as you could, you would begin the war over again. This is all the recognition we could expect from the French people! But we, we Prussians, just the opposite of you, are an honest and peaceable people; we are never disturbed by the desire of making con-

Digitized by Google

quests; and would like nothing better than to live in peace, if you were not constantly exciting us by your quarrelsome and domineering disposition."

It was not difficult to see, from these words of the German diplomatist, that, notwithstanding his remarks, he might have been willing to treat with the Emperor and that only the fear of a change of Government decided him to insist upon those severe terms which would guarantee peace of themselves, even in case of such a change.

Had General de Wimpfen, therefore, tried to remove this fear and to defend the loyalty of the nation, or had Count Bismarck been convinced of the loyalty of the General himself, then the Count might have been induced to qualify his statements and to moderate his demands. But the French General made no adequate reply; and when the German statesman, who evidently had desired to sound the opinion of General de Wimpfen, saw that the French plenipotentiary did not think for a moment of protesting against the idea of a possible insurrection in Paris and of an eventual dethronement of the Emperor, he continued his attacks upon the unreliable character of the French people.

"France has not changed. It is she that has desired war. . . . We know very well that the reasonable and healthy part of France was not inclined towards this war; nevertheless, it also finally accepted the idea of it willingly. We know, too, that it was not the army which was most hostile to us. The party in France which forcibly desired war was the one which creates and destroys governments. In

Digitized by Google

your country, this is the populace; it is also the *journalists* [and he put a stress upon this word]; it is these we wish to punish; we must therefore go to Paris. Who knows what will happen? Perhaps there will be formed in your country one of those governments that respect nothing, that make laws for their own pleasure; that will not recognise the capitulation you will have signed for the army; a government which perhaps may force the officers to violate the promises they have given us; for, of course, they will say that they have to defend themselves at any price." [1]

These words characterise plainly enough the reasons which made the German authorities distrust the expediency of concessions they otherwise might have granted, and led them to insist upon a surrender on the severe conditions which they had at first demanded. General de Wimpfen, as will be seen, was finally compelled to accept them.

"On the morning of the 2nd of September, Napoleon III., attended by the Prince de la Moskowa, stepped into a 'droschke' drawn by two horses, and drove to the Prussian lines. General Reille preceded him, on horseback, in order to inform Count Bismarck of his coming. The Emperor, counting upon returning to the town, did not take leave of the troops of the line, nor of the battalion of Grenadiers; nor of the *Cent Gardes*, who were his habitual body-guard. When the drawbridge of the southern gate of Sedan was lowered, the Zouaves, who were on duty there,

[1] Cf. "La Journée de Sedan," par le Général Ducrot, pp. 53 ff.

Digitized by Google

saluted him again with the cry of '*Vive l'Empereur!*' It was the last adieu he was ever to hear.

"Having arrived within a quarter of a league of Donchéry, and not wishing to go to the Prussian headquarters, the Emperor stopped at a little house on the side of the road, and waited there for the Chancellor of the Confederation of the North. The Chancellor, informed by General Reille, arrived soon after." [1]

Count Bismarck, in a report which he sent to the Prussian King, has described what then took place. The following is an almost literal translation of his words from a French text:

"DONCHÉRY, *2nd September.*

"Having gone, last evening, by order of your Majesty, to this place, to take part in the negotiations for the surrender, these were suspended until about one o'clock at night, in compliance with a request on the part of General de Wimpfen. Already General von Moltke had declared in the most categorical manner that no other condition would be admitted than that of laying down arms; and that the bombardment would recommence at nine o'clock in the morning, if at that hour the surrender had not been made.

"About six o'clock this morning the arrival of General Reille was announced. He informed me that the Emperor wished to see me, and that he was already on his way hither from Sedan. The General immediately returned to announce to his Majesty that I was

[1] "Œuvres Posthumes de Napoléon III.," p. 245.

Digitized by Google

following him; and shortly after, about half-way between here and Sedan, near Frenois, I found myself in the presence of the Emperor. His Majesty, with three superior officers, was in an open carriage, and by the side of the carriage there were three other officers on horseback, among whom were Generals Castelneau, Reille, Vaubert, and Moskowa (the last appearing to be wounded in the foot), who were personally known to me.

"When I came to the carriage I dismounted, and going up to his Majesty and putting my foot on the step of the carriage, I asked him what were his commands. The Emperor immediately expressed a wish to see your Majesty, being under the impression that your Majesty was in Donchéry. After I had replied that your Majesty was at that moment in the headquarters at Vendresse, two hours' distant, the Emperor asked if your Majesty had appointed a place to which he should proceed, and, if you had not, what was my opinion on the subject. I replied that I had come here late at night, in the dark, and that the locality was unknown to me. I offered for his accommodation the house I myself occupied at Donchéry, which I was ready to leave at once. The Emperor accepted the offer, and the carriage proceeded at a walk towards Donchéry.

"About a hundred yards, however, from the bridge over the Meuse, at the entrance to the town, he stopped before the house of an artisan, lonely in its situation, and asked me if he could descend there from his carriage. I requested Count Bismarck-Bohlen, Counsellor of Legation, who had in the meantime

Digitized by Google

overtaken me, to examine the house; and, although he informed me that it was small and poorly furnished, the Emperor got down from the carriage and requested me to follow him. There, in a small room which contained but one table and two chairs, I had about an hour's conversation with him.

"His Majesty insisted particularly upon obtaining favourable terms of capitulation for the army. I declined from the outset to discuss this matter with him, because the purely military questions were to be settled between Generals von Moltke and de Wimpfen. On the other hand, I asked his Majesty if he was inclined to enter into negotiations for peace. The Emperor replied that, as a prisoner, he was not now in a position to do so. And when I further asked who, in his opinion, actually represented authority in France, his Majesty referred me to the Government then existing in Paris.

"After this point had been cleared up—about which one could not form a definite opinion from the letter sent yesterday by the Emperor to your Majesty—I recognised, and I did not conceal the fact from the Emperor, that the situation to-day, as yesterday, presented no practical side but the military one; and I dwelt upon the paramount necessity, in consequence, of having in our hands, through the surrender of Sedan first of all, a material guarantee that would assure to us the military advantages that we had now gained.

"I had on the previous evening, with General von Moltke, discussed and examined every side of the question whether it would be possible, without injury

Digitized by Google

to the interests of Germany, to concede to the military honour of an army that had fought bravely, conditions more favourable than those already demanded. After due deliberation, we were both compelled to persist in our negative opinion. If, therefore, General von Moltke, who meantime had joined us, returned to your Majesty to lay before you the wishes of the Emperor, it was not, as your Majesty knows, to speak in their favour.

"The Emperor then went into the open air, and invited me to sit beside him before the door of the house. His Majesty asked me if it was not possible to let the French army cross the Belgian frontier, so that it might be there disarmed and interned. I had discussed this contingency also with General von Moltke on the previous evening, and, for the reasons already alluded to, I declined to consider the suggestion.

"The political situation I, on my part, did not broach, nor did the Emperor either, only in so far as he deplored the misfortunes of the war. He declared that he himself had not wished for war, but that he had been compelled to make it by the pressure of French public opinion.

"In the meantime, after inquiries in the town, and in particular through reconnoitrings by the officers of the general staff, it was decided that the Château of Bellevue, near Frenois, which was not occupied by the wounded, was a suitable place for the reception of the Emperor. I announced it to his Majesty, saying that I would propose Frenois to your Majesty as the place of meeting; and I asked the Emperor if he would not prefer to go there immediately, since a longer stay at

Digitized by Google

this small house was not becoming to him, and as he perhaps was in want of some repose.

"His Majesty readily accepted the suggestion, and I conducted him, preceded by a guard of honour chosen from your Majesty's regiment of body-guards, to the Château of Bellevue where the staff and the carriages of the Emperor, coming directly from Sedan, had already arrived. I found there also General de Wimpfen; and, while waiting for the return of General von Moltke, General Podbielski resumed with him the negotiations concerning the capitulation that had been broken off yesterday, in the presence of Lieutenant-Colonel von Verdy and the chief of General de Wimpfen's staff, the last two drawing up the official report.

"I took no part in these negotiations except, at the beginning, by reciting the political and legal aspects of the situation, in conformity with what the Emperor himself had said to me. But at this instant I received by Rittmeister Count von Noslitz a notice from General von Moltke that your Majesty did not wish to see the Emperor until after the capitulation had been signed. This announcement extinguished on both sides the hope that any other conditions than those already stipulated would be agreed to.

"I went after this to Chehéry to see your Majesty in order that I might announce to you the position of affairs; and on the way I met General von Moltke, with the text of the capitulation as approved by your Majesty; which, after we came together at Frenois, was, without discussion, accepted and signed.

"The conduct of General de Wimpfen, like that of

Digitized by Google

the other French generals on the preceding night, was very dignified. This brave officer, however, could not refrain from expressing to me his profound distress at being called upon, forty-eight hours after his arrival from Africa, and six hours after his receiving the command, to sign his name to a capitulation so cruel to the French arms. But the want of provisions and ammunition, and the absolute impossibility of any further defence, had, he said, laid upon him, as a general, the duty of sinking his personal feeling, since more bloodshed could not make any change for the better in the situation.

"Our agreement to let the officers depart with their arms on parole was received with lively gratitude as an indication of the intention of your Majesty—exceeding even the demands of our military and political interests—to spare the feelings of an army that had fought so bravely. To this sentiment General de Wimpfen has given emphatic expression in a letter in which he has returned his thanks to General von Moltke for the considerate and courteous manner in which the negotiations on his side were conducted."

After the capitulation had been signed, General de Wimpfen submitted the document to the Emperor, who was in a room on the floor above. Soon after, the King of Prussia and the Prince Royal came up to the château on horseback, accompanied by a small escort.

The meeting between the sovereigns was most painful. Both the King and the Prince Royal expressed for the Emperor the deepest sympathy, and assured him of their readiness to do everything in

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

NAPOLEON III.

From his last photograph taken by W. and D. Downey in 1872.

To face p. 277.

Digitized by Google

their power to ameliorate the sadness of his situation. The King then assigned to him the Palace at Wilhelmshöhe as a residence, and permitted him to send in cipher a despatch to the Empress. In this despatch the Emperor announced briefly the disaster at Sedan, and advised the Empress to endeavour to negotiate a peace.

How profoundly the Emperor was affected by the disastrous end of the campaign is made painfully evident in the two letters which he wrote to the Empress immediately after the capitulation of the army. They are as follows:

[TRANSLATION]

"QUARTIER IMPÉRIAL, *September* 2, 1870.

"MY DEAR EUGÉNIE:

"It is impossible for me to express to you what I have suffered and what I suffer. We have made a march contrary to all principles and to common sense. This could not fail to bring on a catastrophe. In fact, it has done so. I should have preferred death to the pain of witnessing so disastrous a capitulation; nevertheless, it was, under the circumstances, the sole means of avoiding the slaughter of 80,000 persons.

"Would that all my torments were centred here! But I think of you, of our son, of our unhappy country. May God protect it! What will become of Paris?

"I have just seen the King. He spoke to me with tears in his eyes of the distress I must feel. He has put at my disposal one of his châteaux near Cassel.

Digitized by Google

But what does it matter where I go! . . . I am in despair. Adieu. I kiss you tenderly.

"NAPOLEON."

[TRANSLATION]

"BOUILLON, *September* 3, 1870.

"MY DEAR EUGÉNIE:

"After the irreparable misfortunes that I have witnessed, I think of the dangers you run, and I am awaiting news from Paris with intense anxiety.

"The present catastrophe is what might have been expected. Our advance was the height of imprudence, and, moreover, very badly managed. But I could never have believed that the catastrophe would prove so frightful. Imagine an army surrounding a fortified town and itself surrounded by far superior forces. At the end of several hours our troops made an entrance into the town. Then the town was filled with a compact crowd, and upon this dense mass of human heads the bombs were falling from all sides, killing the people who were in the streets, bursting through roofs and setting houses on fire.

"In this extremity the generals came to tell me that all resistance was impossible. There were neither regular troops, nor ammunition, nor provisions remaining. A charge was attempted, but was unsuccessful.

"I remained four hours upon the field of battle.

"The march to-day in the midst of the Prussian troops was veritable torture. Adieu. I kiss you tenderly.

"NAPOLEON."

Digitized by Google

The Emperor had yet two years to live; but at Sedan he was struck with death. Humiliated and overwhelmed with grief on that day, his heart was broken by the outrageous accusations that continued to pursue him without respite. He harboured little bitterness of feeling towards his accusers. He even made excuses for some of those who, forgetting his entire past, believed the charges preferred against him; but they caused him no less suffering. His responsibility he accepted, but it was never out of his mind. Often a broken phrase escaping his lips, as if in spite of himself, betrayed to those about him the persistence of that fixed idea which haunted him to the tomb. "Conneau," said he, in a weak and barely intelligible voice, the instant before he expired, "Conneau, were you at Sedan?" These words, the last that he uttered, plainly revealed the ever-open wound.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

THE FALL OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

Effects in Paris of the news of the first reverses—"*Nous sommes trahis*"—The resignation of the Ministry—General de Palikao—A new Ministry is formed—General Trochu is appointed Military Governor—An unsuccessful mission—The announcement of the disaster of Sedan—A Cabinet Council is convoked—General Trochu is requested to come to the Palace—The night of September 3rd at the Tuileries—The morning of September 4th—The council of Ministers—A deputation is sent to the Empress—Her Majesty is advised to resign—Her reply—The proposition of M. Thiers—The Palais-Bourbon is invaded by the mob—The conduct of General Trochu—The Emperor pronounces it "flagrant treason"—The simple facts—A pandemonium—The last session of the Senate—"I yield to force."

WE have now to return to the French capital, where we saw the population so hopeful and exultant at the outbreak of the war.

How changed is everything here! The first bad news had effected a revulsion in the popular feeling; and the general intoxication was followed by a sudden and complete reaction, as soon as the defeats of the French arms at Wissembourg, Froeschwiller, and Forbach became known.

If the misfortunes of their country had merely

Digitized by Google

sobered the minds of the people, and produced among them a clear understanding of the actual state of things, and the consciousness of having been themselves the cause of the disasters, the result might have been highly beneficial, and all the mistakes might perhaps still have been repaired. As it was, the first reverses only prepared the way for new ones; for in the panic that followed, the people, instead of strengthening the hands of the Government, madly strove in every way to weaken its hold on the country and to paralyse its efforts to meet the requirements of the situation.

On the 8th of August the Empress issued a proclamation.

"Frenchmen," said she, "the beginning of the war is unfavourable to us; we have met with a check. Be firm in the presence of this reverse, and let us make haste to repair it. Let there be among us but one party—that of France; but one standard—that of the national honour. I am here in the midst of you; and, faithful to my mission and to my duty, you will see me the first in the place of danger to defend the flag of France."

But she appealed in vain to the patriotism and the chivalry of the nation.

Before the beginning of the war the opposition of the people to the will of the sovereign had prevented him from making the necessary preparations; and as a consequence the army had been defeated; but those who had violently opposed every proposal to increase the efficiency of the army, far from blaming themselves, now accused the Government of negligence,

Digitized by Google

and held it responsible for the loss of the first battles.

To abolish the existing Ministry, therefore, became the chief desire of the demoralised and discontented people. There was a great discordance of opinion, however, with regard to the persons by whom it should be replaced. All were clamouring that something should be done, but no one seemed to know what ought to be done. Some believed it would be sufficient, in order to obtain the immediate triumph of the French arms, simply to write the word "Republic" upon the flag; others proclaimed that the presence of the Count de Chambord upon the throne would have that effect—by securing for France alliances; but on one point all the enemies of the Empire agreed, viz, that the Deputies should be called together, and that the Ollivier Cabinet should be overthrown.

The people, dazed or stung to madness by defeat, forgot their own interests and the welfare of their country; while an unscrupulous Press, instead of trying to aid the Government in its difficult task, by urging the population to keep calm, and by informing them that the safety of the State, that even the integrity of France, depended on the union of its citizens in the defence of their fatherland, took special pains to incite their readers to a revolution, by appealing to their political animosities and prejudices, and, finally, by telling them that they had been betrayed.

Among a people essentially democratic, the national vanity is a force that is apt to dominate the public intelligence and to silence conscience. The people

Digitized by Google

can do no wrong; they are always wise and blameless. If they meet with disasters and defeat, it is never through any fault of theirs, but is attributed to the ignorance and folly, or treachery even, of their official representatives.

To the foreigner knowing something of the organisation of the French army sent into the field in 1870, and of the causes which had determined that organisation, nothing could sound more pitiful or contemptible than the cries of "*nous sommes trahis*" with which wounded vanity filled the air of the capital, while courage and self-abnegation, and all that was noblest in France, were yielding up their lives in a desperate struggle with overwhelming numbers to defend the honour of the country and protect and preserve the patrimony of the people.

Betrayed! Yes. The French were betrayed; but not by Napoleon III., nor by the generals, whose misfortune it was to lead the armies of France to defeat; but by the men who persistently refused to give to the Emperor the military organisation which he had called for, and who, with an ignorant incomprehension of the political aims of the Prussian Government, and stupidly refusing to recognise the military power of Germany after it had been clearly revealed to the world, were incessantly clamouring for war and a compensation for Sadowa, and boasting of the invincibility of the French army.

If the French people were betrayed in 1870, it was by political demagogues in the Chamber of Deputies or speaking through the Press, who on the one hand magnified the burden of the war budget, talked of

Digitized by Google

vast and needless expenditures, and denounced the army as a menace to liberty; while on the other hand they flattered the people with phrases until they actually believed they were unconquerable.

The French people were rudely awakened from this illusive dream by the German guns at Woerth and Forbach. But it was their own fault if they began to pay the penalty then, which they never since have ceased to pay, in armies surrendered, provinces lost, the horrors of the Commune, immense indemnities, the public debt doubled, taxes enormously increased, a remorseless conscription law that forces every able-bodied Frenchman to serve in the army for three years, and, most humiliating of all—for as Renan has said, "*La France souffre tout excepté d'être médiocre*"—in being compelled to witness and to acknowledge the fall of their country from its ancient position of leadership among the great Powers of Europe. And all this through the failure to make, for the contingency of a war that was imminent, such provision as common sense should have recognised as necessary for the national security.

What a warning of the danger of being caught unprepared for war! The Franco-German War of 1870 exhibited once more to the world the irreparable consequences of a nation losing its instinctive consciousness of its military needs—of permitting itself to be enticed away from all thought or concern for the public welfare by the demands of individual and private interest, the accumulation of wealth, the love of luxury, and the display of personal possessions.

For it must be admitted that not the least among

Digitized by Google

the indirect causes of the disasters that overwhelmed the French armies, as well as of the final collapse of the Imperial *régime*, was the extraordinary commercial prosperity of the country from 1852 to 1870. This was the period of the greatest industrial activity that France had ever before known. Vast fortunes were rapidly made and as rapidly dissipated, and Frenchmen amused themselves. It is in such times, when "*tout bourgeois veut bâtir comme les grands seigneurs*," that the solidarity of society is lost sight of, and the State is exposed to the dangers that follow in the train of a sordid and incoherent individualism.

Since the Emperor, before leaving for the field, had unfortunately promised that the National Assembly should be convoked in case the nation desired it, the Empress Regent had to give way to the general clamour, and the session of the Legislative Body was accordingly fixed for the 9th of August.

At the very first meeting of the Deputies, the Ministers recognised that they would have to resign. Her Majesty could not help accepting their resignation; and she consequently was compelled to choose a new Cabinet. The wishes of the Radicals were thus fulfilled, and a ministerial crisis was added to the perils of the situation.

The Empress, after a short deliberation with her Counsellors, sent a message to Count de Palikao, summoning him to come without delay to the capital.

The Count arrived in Paris on the morning of the 10th, and immediately hastened to the palace. Notwithstanding the fact that he had been somewhat

Digitized by Google

neglected at the beginning of the war, and that younger officers had obtained important positions and commands in the army in the field, while he was obliged to remain at Lyons, he was anxious to do all in his power to aid the Regent and to defend his country.

When his arrival was announced the Empress, who at the time was with her ministers, rose, and stepping forward to meet him, said: "General, I have sent for you because I have a great act of devotion to ask of you." Count de Palikao answered: "I am ready to show all my devotion to the Empress and to my country. Will your Majesty please indicate what you desire of me?"

"I ask of you to be our Minister of War," the Empress replied.

That was not exactly an enviable position. Nevertheless, after having hesitated for some moments, and after having stated that he had little experience in political affairs, that he was a soldier, and not accustomed to speak in public, Count de Palikao accepted. His patriotism was, however, to undergo a still more serious test.

"General," said the Empress, "since you have submitted, you must sacrifice yourself entirely. You must form a new Ministry." [1]

Such a mission was exceedingly difficult for a man who had spent nearly all his life in camp, and the responsibilities connected with it might have deterred many men. As, however, the Empress and her

[1] Cf. "Enquête Parlementaire sur les Actes du Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale," tome i. p. 164 ff.

Digitized by Google

counsellors insisted, and maintained that there was no other man who could form a Cabinet that would have any chance of permanency, he finally agreed also to this proposition.

Count de Palikao was one of those old soldiers who never discuss a point when there is a duty in question, but who go right to work without phrases. After some hours of labour, thanks to his patriotism, he was able to present to her Majesty and the Chamber the list of persons whom he proposed for the new Cabinet. It was constituted as follows: Count de Palikao himself had the portfolio of War; Henri Chevreau became Minister of the Interior; Magne was named Minister of Finance; Granperret, Minister of Justice; Clément Duvernois, Minister of Commerce; Admiral Rigault de Genouilly kept his place as Minister of the Navy; Baron Jérôme David was appointed Minister of Public Works; the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne became Minister for Foreign Affairs; Brame, Minister of Public Instruction; and Busson-Billault was appointed President of the State Council.

It now devolved upon this new Ministry to satisfy the popular feeling with regard to the command of the army. How this was accomplished we have seen. The Cabinet granted the wish of the Opposition, and the result was that General Lebœuf resigned, and the Emperor laid down his military command.

This change in the general administration proved disastrous; for, however unfit General Lebœuf may have been, it was he who had made all the preparations for the campaign; and to depose him, and

Digitized by Google

entrust his position to any one else, however capable, necessarily brought about confusion, since it was impossible for his successor to efficiently discharge the duties of his most important office without becoming acquainted not only with the general state of things, but with a great multitude of essential details as well. And for such studies there was no time, in the midst of the serious events which were then following each other in quick succession.

Other circumstances, moreover, aggravated the situation. General Trochu, who, as already mentioned, had been appointed by the Emperor Military Governor of Paris, entered the city at the head of an enormous army of *Gardes Mobiles*, and soon assumed there a position which was altogether exceptional.

When he presented himself before the Empress Regent, in order to announce to her his nomination, her Majesty was at first very much startled. She accepted, however, the appointment, and finally became reconciled to it, because a number of persons about her seemed to have confidence in the new Governor.

The events which followed proved that in selecting the Governor a great mistake had been made; and to the Emperor, as well as to the Regent, who had been induced to believe in the loyalty of the man, it was soon to be revealed with startling effect that the sympathies of General Trochu were not what they should have been, but that at heart he was with the enemies of the Imperial dynasty.

During the evening of the 2nd of September there were rumours of a disaster at Sedan, and M. Jérôme

Digitized by Google

David, a member of the Cabinet, received a private despatch announcing that the Emperor had been taken prisoner. But in the absence of official news, Paris at the time was full of the wildest rumours. Nevertheless, the Empress was greatly moved by these reports, and they produced upon the public in general a state of excitement or consternation that was paralysing and fatal to any well-conceived, intelligent effort to assist the sovereign to meet the impending crisis. One of the first thoughts that occurred to some of the friends of her Majesty was that M. Thiers might perhaps be induced to come to her assistance, or, at least, to consent to aid her with his counsel. And, curiously enough, a precedent for this idea was found in the course taken by Marie Antoinette, who, in circumstances in some respects similar, had appealed to Mirabeau, and had obtained from him the reply, "*Madame, la monarchie est sauvée.*" And then, again, had not M. Thiers sent word to the Emperor, only a few weeks before, that the time might come when he could be of service to the Imperial Government? And so it was that M. Prosper Mérimée, a friend of the Empress from her childhood, was requested to see M. Thiers and ascertain if he would consent to give to her Majesty the benefit of his counsel. And M. Mérimée failing to obtain a satisfactory reply, immediately afterward, on the same day, M. Ayguesvives was entrusted with the same mission, but equally without success; for M. Thiers, whatever may have been the quality of his patriotism, was altogether too astute to embark his political fortunes in a sinking ship.

Digitized by Google

The Empress herself had no knowledge of this proceeding. Nor is the incident of any special consequence, except as it throws a vivid light upon the disarray and demoralisation existing at the time about the Court and in official circles.

It was about half-past four o'clock on the 3rd of September when M. de Vougy, the Director of the Telegraphic Service, brought to the Tuileries the despatch in which the Emperor announced to his consort the disaster of Sedan. M. Chevreau, when he had read the communication, pale with terror and struck dumb by the calamity, hastened to the Empress and handed to her the ominous paper that contained only two lines, but two lines of the most terrible significance:

"*L'armée est défaite et captive; n'ayant pu me faire tuer au milieu de mes soldats, j'ai dû me constituer prisonnier pour sauver l'armée.—Napoleon.*"

(The army has been defeated and captured. Having been unable to get killed in the midst of my soldiers, I have been obliged to give myself up as a prisoner in order to save the army.)

With a cry of anguish, the Empress, who had risen to meet her Minister, sank back into her seat. The weakness of the woman succumbed to this fearful blow of fate, and the hot tears came rushing into her eyes. For a few painful moments she remained silent; her distress was too acute for speech or thought. She then arose and retired to her private cabinet. But after a little while she revived, and becoming conscious of her responsibilities as Regent, and stimulated by

Digitized by Google

the hope that even yet all was not lost, began to think what it was her duty to do, in view of the new situation that had been created, and what measures should be taken to limit, or prevent, if possible, some of its most appalling and disastrous consequences. A Cabinet Council was called by her, and half an hour later the Ministers met together for the purpose of considering what should be done to check the advance of the Prussians and safeguard the interests of France. The sitting lasted until nearly nine o'clock.

A new *coup-d'État* might have saved the dynasty; but the Regent, as well as the majority of her Ministers, was decidedly against such a measure. When the question arose whether the Tuileries and other public buildings should be defended by an armed force, in case of necessity, the Regent, while she consented that the Chamber of Deputies should be protected by troops, positively refused to have the Tuileries protected except by the usual guard. She expressly insisted that orders should be given to the soldiers not to fire upon the people, whatever might happen, and she declared it to be her wish that not a drop of French blood should be shed for the preservation of her life.[1]

The only means which now remained for saving the Government was to try to obtain the spontaneous assistance of all its forces; and it was recognised that General Trochu alone, on account of his position and his popularity, would be able to exercise the desired influence upon the troops in Paris. Should he show

[1] "Enquête Parlementaire," tome i. p. 145.

Digitized by Google

himself resolute to defend the Government, then it was certain he would carry along with him the National Guards and defeat the hopes of the Republican agitators. Her Majesty therefore sought to obtain the assistance of the Governor of Paris, whose special mission it was to defend the Government and provide for the security of the capital, and upon whose loyalty and support she confidently counted. For this purpose she requested Admiral Jurien de la Gravière to inform General Trochu that she wished very much to see him. General Trochu sent back word that he had just returned from a visit to the forts, that he was very tired, and had not yet dined. The Empress expressed her surprise on being told the reason given by General Trochu for not immediately complying with her request. "He has not had his dinner!" she exclaimed; "neither have I had mine. Is it becoming, at an hour like this, to think first of our dinners?" And then she sent M. Chevreau, the Minister of the Interior, to him, to announce the contents of the telegram which she had received from the Emperor, and to request him to come at once to the palace, in order to deliberate with her in regard to the necessary preparations for an emergency.

M. Chevreau hastened to the Louvre and delivered this message to General Trochu. He described to him the anguish and despair of the Regent. "She has received the most cruel blow," he said, "as a sovereign, as a wife, and as a mother; there is no portion of her heart that does not bleed. She needs to have near her devotion and friendship. Go to her; your presence will do her good."

Digitized by Google

The General answered that he had just dismounted from his horse; that he was tired; that he had not yet dined, but that he would come in the evening, after his dinner, to see her Majesty.[1]

M. Chevreau left General Trochu very much astonished at his trivial excuses, but in the persuasion that the Governor would, nevertheless, go to the Tuileries. In fact, how could any one believe that a soldier would refuse to meet his sovereign, who had appealed to him for counsel, were it only as a mark of sympathy for a woman in misfortune, especially when he had taken upon himself the duty of aiding and defending her? General Trochu, however, did not go to the palace that evening. Again and again he was sent for, but could not be found.

Until late in the evening of Saturday, the 3rd, the *entourage* of the Empress had not lost their confidence in the ability of the Imperial Government to maintain itself. It was reported that, the Radicals having approached General Trochu, he had replied: "Don't count on me. I shall remain faithful to the duty I have accepted"; and that, on the other hand, General de Palikao had said openly that he would not hesitate a moment to send the Governor of Paris to Vincennes, if he suspected him to be a traitor. But with the declining day the occupants of the Tuileries began to grow anxious. The reports received became more and more alarming. All night long the Empress was occupied in opening despatches that came in from every side, some communicating the poignant details of the recent battles; others reporting the openly

[1] "L'Empire et la Défense de Paris," par le Général Trochu, p. 82.

Digitized by Google

hostile manifestations that were taking place in the streets of Paris; that a plot, even, had been laid to seize her as a hostage; but not one word of good news, not one word of encouragement, came from without to brighten the sinister story of misfortune that was breaking her heart, or to lighten the burden of official duties that was overwhelming her. That night there was a sitting of the Chamber of Deputies. But not a Minister, not a person, came to inform her Majesty what resolutions had been taken, or to report to her the proceedings at this important meeting. Bravely she strove to support, without faltering, the cruel blows that were falling upon her, and with admirable fortitude devoted every energy of her being to the defence of the nation. After a night passed without a moment's rest, at seven o'clock the Empress retired to the little chapel attached to her apartment, there to fall upon her knees and invoke the Divine compassion and assistance. Half an hour later, as a Sister of Charity, she visited the hospital that had been established at the Tuileries, in the great Salle des Spectacles, near the Pavillon de Marsan, and which was filled with the wounded who had been brought back to Paris.

Amid all these occupations and distractions, she found time to send a despatch to her mother, the Countess de Montijo, who was in Madrid, announcing the disaster at Sedan, and closing with words that revealed a spirit undaunted, and her indomitable resolve to do her duty, let come what might:

"Keep up your courage, dear mother. If France

Digitized by Google

wishes to defend herself, she is able to. I shall do my duty. Your unhappy daughter, EUGÉNIE."

At half-past eight o'clock the Council was to meet. Just before this meeting it was suggested to the Empress, by one of her friends, that General Trochu could not be trusted. But her Majesty would not listen to what was said; had not the Governor given his orders that cavalry be posted at the Palais-Bourbon, and the Tuileries guarded? and had not General Trochu also sent word that he would be present at the meeting of the Council?

When the hour fixed for the meeting had already passed, and General Trochu had not yet arrived, M. Chevreau asked the Empress to let the Ministers wait for the Governor, contrary to all usage, so necessary was his presence at this Council. At last the General made his appearance, and saluted the Empress with the vague, bombastic phrase: "*Madame, voilà l'heure des grands périls! Nous ferons tout ce que nous devons.*" (Madame, behold the hour of great perils has come! We shall do everything that we ought to do.) [1]

After this the General had some private conversation with her Majesty, which, whatever may have been his protestations of devotion and his promises to protect her person, could scarcely have reassured the Empress with respect to his purpose to use the influence and means at his disposition to uphold and maintain the Government; for when she re-entered the Council-room, and when M. Chevreau, anxious

[1] "L'Empire et la Défense de Paris," p. 428.

Digitized by Google

to know how matters stood, approached her with the words, "*Eh bien, madame?*" her Majesty made no reply except by an appealing look and gesture, which indicated that there was little hope.[1]

The Council of Ministers then examined the situation on all sides, and deliberated upon the means which might possibly prevent the danger that seemed to be rapidly approaching. For, the night before, Jules Favre had already proposed to the Deputies that Napoleon III. be deposed, and his dynasty overthrown; while, judging by the reports which arrived from the Prefecture of Police, it could not be doubted that an insurrection might take place that very day.

Some of the persons present gave expression to the opinion that it would perhaps be wise to transfer the seat of the Government from Paris to one of the cities in the provinces. But it was remarked that were this done the capital would be at the mercy of the mob; that the Parisians would undoubtedly set up a new Government, and that, through interior disorder and dissension which must necessarily follow, the city would be delivered into the hands of the enemy. In consequence of considerations of this nature, the idea of changing the seat of Government was rejected by most of the members of the Cabinet Council, and also by her Majesty herself, who concluded her remarks on the subject with the words: "*Il faut tomber sans encombrer la résistance.*"[2] (Let me fall without being an encumbrance to the defence.)

It was finally agreed that a proclamation should be

[1] "Enquête Parlementaire," tome i. p. 267.

[2] Ibid., op. cit., tome i. p. 156.

Digitized by Google

published informing the people of the military situation and appealing to their patriotism, and that the Government should be strengthened by the participation of the two Chambers. But opinions differed as to the manner in which this co-operation ought to be obtained.

One of the Deputies, M. Buffet, had advised the Ministers to persuade the Regent to place all her powers in the hands of the Legislative Assembly, in order to put this body in a position to elect a new Executive power; but this advice was rejected because it was alleged that, in case the Regency should declare itself void of power, the Legislative Assembly would also, at the same time, lose its legal authority.

The Ministers finally proposed to present to the Assembly a law by which a Council, consisting of five members elected by the Deputies, should receive the power to assist the Regent, and by which Count de Palikao should be appointed Lieutenant-General, and President of this Council.

This proposition was submitted to the Deputies at the sitting which was opened a few hours later—at 1 p.m.—but did not meet with the approval of the majority; it was rejected, with many others, and the project of M. Buffet was declared to be the only acceptable one. This gentleman, therefore, accompanied by MM. Daru, Kolb-Bernard, Genton, d'Ayguesvives, Baron de Pierres, and M. Dupuy-de-Lôme, was sent to the Tuileries, in order to request her Majesty to renounce her power and to hand it over to the Legislative Body.

Digitized by Google

The Empress received the deputation graciously, yet with great dignity, and without apparent agitation. The interview took place in the *Salon Bleu*, adjoining her Majesty's private cabinet. M. Buffet spoke first, explaining the project in the name of his colleagues. This he did at considerable length, setting forth its purpose with clearness and force, and exhibiting deep feeling. He was followed by M. Daru, who spoke strongly in favour of the measure.

The Empress listened calmly to the speeches of the Deputies, and then, as if under the influence of a sort of inspiration, she replied:

"Gentlemen, you say the future can be insured on condition that I now, and at an hour of the greatest peril, abandon the post that has been confided to me. I must not, I cannot, consent to that. The future occupies me to-day the least of all things—I mean, not, of course, the future of France, but the future of our dynasty. Believe me, gentlemen, the trials through which I have passed have been so painful, so horrible, that, at the present moment, the thought of preserving the crown to the Emperor, and to my son, gives me very little anxiety. My only care, my only ambition, is to fulfil to the utmost the duties which have been imposed upon me. If you believe, if the Legislative Body believes, that I am an encumbrance, that the name of the Emperor is an obstacle, and not a source of strength in the attempt to master the situation and organise the defence, then you ought to pronounce the dethronement; and if you do, I will not complain, for then I shall be able to leave my place with honour. I should not, in that case, have

Digitized by Google

deserted it. My honour, my duty, and, above all, the interests of the country in the presence of a triumphant enemy, require that the integrity of the Government should be maintained. I shall remain till the very last moment where I have been placed, faithful to my office. Were I to do otherwise, like a soldier who deserts his post in the hour of peril, I should betray the trust the Emperor has confided to me. I am persuaded that the only sensible and patriotic course the Representatives of the country can take, will be to gather around me and around my Government, to leave aside, for the moment, all questions of party, and to unite their efforts strictly with mine in order to meet the invasion."

After these words, the Empress recalled to the Deputies the noble behaviour of the Cortes of Spain in Cadiz, who remained true to their captive King, and who were rewarded for their unchangeable devotion and their energetic perseverance by the final triumph of their cause.

"As for myself," she continued, "I am ready to meet all dangers, and to follow the Legislative Body to any place where it may decide to organise the defence; and even should a defence be found impossible, I believe I might still be useful in obtaining the most favourable terms of peace.

"Yesterday the Representative of a great Power proposed to me to secure the mediation of the neutral countries upon these two grounds: 'Integrity of the French territory, and the maintenance of the Imperial dynasty.' I answered that I was disposed to accept a mediation upon the first basis, but I energetically

Digitized by Google

refused it upon the second. The preservation of the dynasty is a subject which regards France alone, and I will never permit foreign Powers to interfere with our interior affairs."

Although these words of her Majesty made a great impression upon the persons present, M. Daru insisted that the Empress should leave her post, and he undertook to prove that, if her Majesty did not willingly resign her place, sooner or later she would be forced to do so; while by her spontaneous resignation, he argued, strength would be given to the Legislative body as well as to the new Government, and thus the country might be saved.

The objection of the Empress to the plan proposed was that she could not accept it without seeming to desert her post at the moment of danger. "In case it is considered that the retention of the Executive power in my hands is an obstacle to the union of the French people, and prejudicial to the defence, do you think, gentlemen, that it would be a great pretension, on the part of a woman who should voluntarily give up a throne, to ask of the Chamber permission to remain in Paris—in any place that might be assigned to her, provided she might be permitted to share the dangers, the anxieties, and the suffering of the besieged capital?

"Do you believe, then," she continued, "that it is agreeable to me to hold on to the powers of the Government?" and, hesitating for a moment, she added, in a voice expressing deep feeling, "Yes, you have seen me the crowned sovereign of your holidays. Nothing hereafter can soften the bitter memory of this

Digitized by Google

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.

From a photograph taken by W. and D. Downey in 1871.

To face p. 300.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

hour. All the mourning of France I shall carry for ever in my soul."

Pressed on all sides, yielding rather than persuaded, her Majesty finally declared that if the Council of the Regency and her Minister of War approved of the act, she would resign.

"You desire it, gentlemen," she said; "it is not the way I have regarded it; but I leave aside all personal considerations; only I wish to act in a regular manner. I wish that my Cabinet should be consulted. If my Ministers agree with you with respect to the course you propose that I should take, I shall make no opposition.

"Speak to M. de Palikao, gentlemen. If he agrees to my resignation, and if he thinks it necessary, I will tender it."

"Then you do permit us," said M. Buffet, "to announce this decision to the Assembly, and to M. de Palikao?"

"Yes," answered the Empress, "you may go and do so."

The Delegates now rose to retire, each one of them bowing low before her, who was still their sovereign, and who took leave of them, extending her hand to each, which they kissed with emotion. "My eyes were filled with tears," said M. Buffet, "as I came away after having witnessed such magnanimity and disinterestedness." [1]

The perfect calmness and self-possession maintained by the Empress from the beginning to the end of this interview greatly impressed all the members of the

[1] "Enquête Parlementaire," tome ii. p. 143 ff.

Digitized by Google

deputation; and especially when, in the midst of the interview, a young man came into the salon without having been previously announced, and cried in a loud voice, "They are there in the Place de la Concorde!" The members of the deputation were startled by this sudden, sharp cry of alarm; but her Majesty remained unmoved.

When the Deputation re-entered the Palais-Bourbon the sitting had just been suspended, and the committees had retired to their bureaus in order to deliberate upon three different propositions: one made by General de Palikao, another by M. Thiers, and the third by M. Jules Favre. It was therefore too late for the President to submit a new proposal to the Chamber, and the Delegates, in consequence, had to report separately, in their respective committee-rooms, the result of their conference with the Empress.

When the decision of the Empress became known to the members sitting in committee, the last cause for hesitation was removed, and the proposition of M. Thiers was, with a small amendment, adopted by the majority. This proposition, after its modification, read as follows:

"In view of the circumstances, the Chamber will proceed to choose a Government Commission for the National Defence. It shall consist of five members, to be elected by the Legislative Body. This Commission will appoint the Ministry. As soon as the circumstances shall permit, the nation will be called upon to elect a Constituent Assembly, the duty of which shall be to decide upon the form of Government."

Digitized by Google

A little after two o'clock the Deputies re-entered the Audience Chamber, but, to their astonishment, they found it occupied by the mob. The galleries of the Chamber had, ever since noon, been crowded with agitators from the faubourgs; and when, at 1.30 p.m., the Deputies retired for deliberation, these individuals went out upon the peristyle of the building, in order to put themselves in communication with the throng that filled the streets around the Legislative Palace, and had gathered on the Bridge and on the Place de la Concorde.

About twenty minutes later, a band of rioters, led by "Pipe-en-Bois," a burlesque celebrity of the time, forced its way into the building; and, in spite of the firmness of M. Schneider, the President, who kept his seat and tried to maintain order, the Audience Chamber was soon filled with insurgents, some armed and in uniform, and some in blouses, a motley mob of men and boys, screaming "*Vive la République!*" "*Déchéance!*" and rending the air with their clamour. They even pushed in among the benches of the Deputies, so that when the latter returned they found most of their seats occupied.

The tumult increased from moment to moment. Notwithstanding the efforts of M. Schneider, and the appeals of Gambetta and other leaders of the Opposition, the order necessary for the transaction of business could not be restored; the voices of the speakers were drowned by the hooting of the mob, and the President, putting on his hat, was compelled to suspend the sitting.

The reader naturally will be astonished to learn that

Digitized by Google

no military force was used to protect the Legislative Body; that no guard had been kept there as a precautionary measure, and that when, the mob having assembled, the Governor of Paris was sent for, he did not appear. In fact, General Trochu did not make the least effort to interfere with the invasion of the Palais-Bourbon; nor with that of the Tuileries, which, as will be seen, was the object of a formidable demonstration shortly afterward.

It is not necessary that I should give my opinion with respect to the conduct of General Trochu on this occasion. Napoleon III. described it as "flagrant treason."

In a pamphlet published shortly before his death, entitled "Les Principes par un Ancien Diplomate," the Emperor speaks of General Trochu as follows:

"There we have a military man who has sworn allegiance to the Emperor, and who receives from him at a moment of supreme importance the greatest mark of confidence. He is appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the forces assembled in the capital. His duty is to watch over the life of the Empress. And this man, who on the morning of the 4th of September declares to the Regent that any one attempting to approach her will have to pass first over his body, permits the Palais-Bourbon and the Tuileries to be invaded; and, but a few hours after his solemn protestation, usurps the power, and declares himself President of the Government of the National Defence.

"Never has there been a treason committed more black, more flagrant, more unpardonable; for it was

Digitized by Google

committed against a woman, and at the time of a foreign invasion. And this man, who must be called a traitor—for this name he deserves—seems nevertheless to enjoy general esteem. He is elected in several departments to the National Assembly by ignorant voters, and people do not blush to shake his hand; they even make him President of the Commission that has to decide upon points of honour.

"Does not this fact plainly demonstrate that we have lost our moral sense? What a contrast between this and an event which happened in the sixteenth century!

"When the Constable of Bourbon, who had conspired against Francis I., went to Spain, Charles V. obliged one of the gentlemen of his Court, the Marquis of Villena, to lodge the Constable. The Marquis obeyed. But when his guest had departed, he burned down his house, declaring that he had no wish to preserve a house which had given shelter to a traitor."

These are the words of the Emperor. And in order that the reader may decide whether they contain a just judgment, I will give an account of the proceedings of General Trochu on the 4th of September, basing my narrative upon official documents.

In the Cabinet Council that was held on the morning of the 4th, and which I have mentioned above, General Trochu had been warned by the Empress that an insurrectional movement would in all probability take place. At half-past one o'clock he was informed by M. Vallette, the Secretary-General to

Digitized by Google

the President of the Legislative Assembly, that M. Schneider feared there might be an outbreak. Towards two o'clock, General Lebreton, Questor of the Assembly, fearing very great anxiety on account of the attitude of the *Gardes Nationaux* and the indications of unusual popular excitement, went personally to the Governor of Paris in order to inform him of the gravity of the situation. When he arrived at the Louvre he was at first told that the Governor could not receive him, as he was very busy. M. Lebreton, however, insisted, and was finally admitted into his presence. He stated to General Trochu that the mob were surrounding the Palais-Bourbon, and that some of the leaders had already entered the building. He implored him to go at once to this place of danger, as his presence was necessary, and for the reason that he alone, by his immense popularity, would be able to keep order and protect the national Representatives. General Trochu answered that it would be impossible for him to do so, alleging that for several days his popularity had been decreasing, and that General de Palikao, the Minister of War, had succeeded in annihilating him completely.

"At present it is too late," he said; "I cannot do anything." To which M. Lebreton replied, "No, it is not too late; but there is not a moment to be lost;" for he was perfectly persuaded that the presence of the Governor would be sufficient to prevent all trouble.[1]

At last General Trochu agreed to go; and when the Questor saw him off, he had no doubt that he

[1] "Enquête Parlementaire," tome ii. p. 149.

Digitized by Google

would go to the Palais-Bourbon to deliver the Assembly from the threatening danger.

In fact, General Trochu, accompanied by two officers, started on the way towards the building where the Representatives were sitting. He passed through the Court of the Tuileries, went to the Place du Carrousel, from there to the Quay, which he followed until he arrived at the Pont de Solférino, and then stopped and waited; because, as he said, "the crowd was too dense at this point for anybody to pass." M. Lebreton, who had left the Louvre at the same time, passed through this crowd without difficulty, and re-entered the Palais-Bourbon. M. Jules Favre and several other Deputies were, at about the same time, also able to push through the crowd, and succeeded in making their way from the Palais-Bourbon to the Louvre.

Soon after the mob had broken into the Audience Chamber of the Legislative Assembly, Jules Favre, Jules Ferry, Kératry, and several other members bitterly hostile to the Imperial Government, decided to go to the Hôtel de Ville, there to proclaim the Republic and seize on the supreme power; and M. de Kératry remarked to M. Jules Favre "that he was certain he would meet, on the way to the Hôtel de Ville, General Trochu, whose assistance would be necessary."[1] How M. de Kératry was sure that he would meet the General we do not know, but the fact is that he and his associates did find the General waiting. "We met him," says M. de Kératry, "on

[1] Déposition de M. Kératry, "Enquête Parlementaire," tome i. p. 650.

Digitized by Google

the Quay of the Tuileries, in front of the Conseil d'Etat, on horseback, surrounded by his staff. It was evident that he was waiting there for the development of events."

M. Jules Favre, accosting him, said: "General, there is no longer a Legislative Body. We are going to the Hôtel de Ville. Be so good as to go back to the Louvre. We will communicate with you there."

Upon this the Governor quietly returned to the Louvre. On his way he, of course, had to pass the Tuileries, where the sovereign was to whom he had sworn in the morning that no one should approach her except over his dead body. Half an hour later the Tuileries were threatened by the rioters; and no one being there to defend the Empress, her Majesty, as will be stated in a subsequent chapter, was obliged to leave her palace as best she could.

About four o'clock in the afternoon MM. Steenackers and Glais-Bizoin came to the headquarters of the Military Governor to beg General Trochu to go to the Hôtel de Ville. The Governor took off his uniform, put on citizen's dress—as if he could lay aside his allegiance with his coat, as if duty were merely a question of clothes—and went.

When General Trochu arrived at the Hôtel de Ville, M. Jules Favre and his associates had already usurped the sovereign power and declared themselves to be the Government. On being informed of this, the General put the following question to the usurpers: "Will you protect these three principles: God, the Family, and Property?" This question was answered affirmatively by M. Jules Favre and his colleagues.

Digitized by Google

"Upon this condition," General Trochu then added, "I am yours, provided you make me President of your Government. It is indispensable that I should occupy this post."

The new Government, knowing well that General Trochu would be necessary for the triumph of their cause, acceded to his wish without hesitation. And so General Trochu, who in the morning had been the Imperial Governor of the city of Paris, was in the evening President of the Insurrectional Government.

These are the simple facts regarding General Trochu's conduct on the 4th of September, 1870; and from these facts alone the reader can decide for himself whether or not the judgment which Napoleon III. pronounced against the Governor of Paris is just.[1]

The condition of things that obtained in the Legislative Chamber after the close of the sitting and the departure of the Deputies and the members of the Cabinet, baffles description. National guards, workmen, vagabonds, thieves, and half-grown boys—the mob—in a compact mass crowded into every part of the Palais-Bourbon, shouting and howling and gesticulating in a wild tumult of disorder. Two young ruffians made a rush for the Presidential chair, and seated themselves in it at the same moment, one of them seizing the President's bell, which he rang with violence and for a long time. Others, standing on the desks of the Deputies, were haranguing the "citizens," and urging them not to leave the building until the Republic had been *re-established* as well as "proclaimed." The uproar increasing, an effort was made

[1] See Appendix VII.

Digitized by Google

to clear the floor of the Chamber, but with small result; and the galleries remained full of people, centres of commotion and of noise; a hundred persons were speaking, but only occasionally could a word be heard —a word of rage or of insult—"*à bas*"—"*conspuez Bonaparte—et sa femme.*" Soon cigars, pipes, and cigarettes were lighted, and a dense cloud of tobacco-smoke obscured the atmosphere. This pandemonium was kept up until it was too dark to see, when, the rioters having slipped away one by one, silence reigned instead in every room of the vast, sombre, and deserted Legislative Palace, until, a few weeks later, it was filled with the wounded and the dying brought in from the battlefields around Paris.

It was about four o'clock when the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne returned to the Foreign Office from the Palais-Bourbon, which he had vainly endeavoured to protect, and meeting there M. Clément Duvernois, said to him: "What has taken place is terrible for the dynasty, but it is still more terrible for the country; because this morning we had the support of conservative Europe to enable us to conclude an honourable peace, and this afternoon we have lost it.[1]

We have seen how the Palais-Bourbon was invaded on the 4th of September. Let us now see what took place on this memorable day at the Luxembourg.

Here, at half-past twelve o'clock, the session of the Senate is opened under the Presidency of M. Rouher.

A Senator, M. Chabrier, immediately mounts the Tribune, and says that he desires to send his "last

[1] "Enquête Parlementaire," tome i. p. 225.

Digitized by Google

good wishes and last homage to the Emperor." He ends his speech with a phrase which has often been heard in France, "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

The Prince Poniatowski: "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

M. de Ségur d'Aguesseau: "*Vive l'Impératrice!*"

M. de Flamarens, believing that the Deputies have already proclaimed the fall of the Empire, protests against this act, and declares it to be unconstitutional, and concludes with the exclamation, "*Vive le Prince Impérial! Vive la Dynastie!*"

M. de Chabrier: "That is understood!"

Numerous voices: "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

M. Nisard: "Vanquished and a prisoner, he is sacred!" (Marks of approbation.)

After this the whole Senate cries together: "*Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Impératrice! Vive le Prince Impérial! Vive la Dynastie!*"

M. Rouher, in a voice trembling with emotion, makes a patriotic speech, which he closes with these words: "In presence of the gravity of these events, we shall know how to show the firmness of our purpose and a resolute and indomitable courage." (Applause.)

M. Quentin-Bauchart: "And a sense of our honour!"

M. Rouher: "I propose to the Senate to declare its sittings permanent!" ("Yes! yes!") "The sitting will be suspended, but will be opened again as soon as I have news from the Legislative Assembly. I ask the members of the Senate not to leave the building."

After this the Senators gather about the desk of the

Digitized by Google

President, who is surrounded on all sides, and every one congratulates him on having so well expressed the heroic sentiments by which the Senate is animated. On the conclusion of this demonstration the members retire, full of patriotic feeling and with resolution in their faces.

When the news of the invasion of the Chamber of Deputies arrives, M. Rouher instructs the ushers to call the Senators together again; and it is as late as half-past two o'clock when these ushers are seen, still rushing through the corridors, crying, "*En séance, messieurs! en séance!*"

And now the President announces in a faltering voice that the mob has entered the Palais-Bourbon. Then he adds, "Does the Senate wish to remain in session, although it is probable that no bill will be presented to us, for the Legislative Assembly cannot deliver it?"

A good many of the Senators think that it would be just as well to retire; but MM. de Mentque and Ségur d'Auguesseau declare that the Senate must remain in permanent session. M. Laradit agrees with them, and adds that it is necessary "to protest against the violence which prevents the Representatives of the people from deliberating calmly and freely"; and M. Émile de Girardin calls out that he is here in virtue of the Plebiscitum, a representative of 7,500,000 votes, and that he will not go out except by force. The sitting is again suspended.

After a pause of half an hour the sitting is resumed, and M. Rouher announces that he has just been informed that the mob has already taken entire

Digitized by Google

possession of the Palais-Bourbon, and that deliberations there are for the moment impossible, and he adds: "I do not know what action the Senate will take, but, whatever it may be, it is my duty to protest against the invasion by force that has paralysed the exercise of one of our great public powers." ("Hear! hear!") "Now I am at the orders of the Senate to know whether you will remain in session, or whether you wish to adjourn, to meet again as soon as it is necessary. It is your right to make the decision, and I call for it."

Whatever the Senate may have wished, M. de Mentque persists in demanding that the Sénators remain in their places. This time his proposition is received not with general approbation, but by what is called in French, "*des mouvements divers*."

M. Rouher then says: "Were the mob at our doors, it would be our imperative duty to face it; but we are not menaced, nor can we deliberate. It is simply a question of dignity, which I shall not discuss; but I am ready to execute the will of the Senate."

M. Baroche agrees with M. Rouher; and while protesting against the assault on the independence of the Chamber of Deputies, and regretting that he cannot even die in the Senate Chamber, as he would like to do, says: "And now, what can we do? We can do nothing here. Perhaps we can render service to the country and to the dynasty outside, for I wish to speak loudly for the dynasty." (Applause.) "Besides, by separating, we yield to force and not to fear, and our purpose is to defend, by our personal

Digitized by Google

influence, order, and the Imperial dynasty to the very last moment."

M. de Mentque still tries to keep his colleagues together, and proposes to wait at least until 5 p.m. The proposition, put to a vote, is rejected. A night session is then proposed. With reference to this proposal, M. Rouher remarks that he will do what he can to call the Senate together, but that the convocation of the Senate in the night might not be accomplished without difficulty.

Several other propositions are made, and, while a confused debate is going on between the Senators Gressier, Dupin, and Haussmann, M. Rouher takes the occasion to leave the Senate Chamber. In his absence the Vice-President, M. Boudet, ascends the Tribune and closes the session with the words, "I request the Senate to come together to-morrow at the usual hour—two o'clock—unless the President should call us together sooner." A resolution to that effect is at once adopted, and the Senators adjourn at 3.30 p.m.

During the whole time this sitting lasted no mob had come to invade the Luxembourg. The Senators seemed to have been entirely forgotten by the people. The cause was the limited and entirely local character of the insurrection, as will be soon shown.

Late in the evening an anonymous communication was sent to the new Government, stating that there would be a night session of the Senate, in the Luxembourg Palace. Upon receiving this, M. Eugéne Pelletan, the only member of the new Government at that time present in the Hôtel de Ville, ordered

Digitized by Google

M. Floquet, a representative of the Municipal administration, to seal up the doors of the Senate Chamber. In conformity with this order, M. Floquet, accompanied by two friends, went to the Palace of the Luxembourg, where he arrived towards ten o'clock. He was announced, and the Grand Referendary, M. Ferdinand Barrot, and General de Montfort, the Governor of the Palace, descended into the court to meet him. M. Floquet handed to the Grand Referendary, who was surrounded by two squadrons of gendarmes, the order of the insurrectionary Government. On receiving it, this gentleman replied, "I yield to force."

After having submitted to force, M. Barrot asked if he might remain in the palace, and if the Senators would be permitted to enter their committee-rooms to remove the articles belonging to them. M. Floquet answered in the affirmative, and while the Grand Referendary was retiring, began quietly to seal up the doors, and thus put an end to the existence of the Senate of the Second Empire.[1]

[1] "Journal du Siège de Paris," par Georges d'Heylli, tome i. p. 21 *et seq.* (Compte-rendu sténographique de la dernière séance du Senat.) "Histoire du Second Empire," par Taxile Delord, tome vi. p. 516 *et seq.*

END OF VOL. I.

Digitized by Google

The Cresham Press,
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED,
WOKING AND LONDON.

53

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google